

Carbery.

V A R I O U S
P R O S P E C T S
O F
M A N K I N D, N A T U R E,
A N D
P R O V I D E N C E.



L O N D O N,
Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand:
MDCCLXI

VARIOS
PROSPECTS



MAN KIND, NATURE,

AND

PROVIDENCE.



LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.

MDCCLXI.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH the Writer of the following Pieces has made several observations upon civil government, and the constitution of society; yet his principal intention in these Prospects, is to illustrate the principles of morality and natural religion; in particular, to discover whether the present life of man has a relation to any other, and thus to trace the designs of providence with respect to a state after death. At the same time, he hopes that his observations will not only answer his principal purpose, but serve likewise to throw some additional light upon human nature, and human society, considered only with relation to the present life.

As the design of the Author is to support religion and virtue, he hopes that the most religious part of the nation may receive benefit from his Prospects: but he thinks it proper to advertise them, that he did not intend his book principally for

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their use. Pious Christians are well confirmed in the belief of religion, and on this account stand less in need of treatises of this kind. The following Speculations are chiefly designed for the Freethinkers, who have not so high a relish, or so steady a faith of religious doctrines.

Having these gentlemen in view, the Author has chosen to write in such a manner as he thought might serve best to gain their attention, and to remove their prejudices. This regard for the benefit of the Freethinkers, whom he would rather convert than irritate; an aversion to the bitterness of controversy, which he contracted at an early time in life; a sense of the difficulty of finding out the truth by the pure dint of criticism and philosophy; a remembrance of his own errors, and compassion for those of others; are the causes why he reasons so coolly, and appears less severe against the persons, or less to condemn the genius of his antagonists, than some others who have had the same good intentions, but have used greater sharpness of stile. Two remarkable

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ble passages in the Apostolical writing have been constantly in his view. "The
 "wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God *. The servant of the
 "Lord must not strive, but be gentle
 "unto all men, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves,
 "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the
 "truth †. Such a conduct is in its own nature most excellent, it is best calculated to preserve peace and friendship, and to promote the most sincere piety. Charity and generosity to the characters of our antagonists shines with a peculiar grace and beauty.

It is true, keen and contemptuous expressions, with a positive air, may sometimes promote our temporal interests, gain a greater popularity, and a higher character for zeal; they may likewise have a greater influence with the multitude, who are ready to trust the men who assert with the greatest confidence: yet

* James i. 20.

† 2 Timothy ii. 24, 25.

when

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when we appear angry in a dispute, even the vulgar will sometimes suspect that we cannot trust to the strength of our arguments; and certainly a calm and modest address bids fairest to have success with men of better education. Gentleness will often have a stronger effect than severity, even where severity can hardly be called unjust; and rough usage tends not to convince, but to provoke men of spirit. However, if it is thought an advantage to any cause, to assume high airs of dogmatism, to accuse antagonists of bad intentions, and to treat their understanding with contempt, there will be no necessity of *pressing* in such a case, and particular persons who are averse to these methods may safely be excused, since there will never be any want of hands for undertaking such a service.

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P R O S P E C T I.

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A General View of the
History of Human Society, and
of the Sources from whence they
flow.

Chapter IV. A View of the History
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PROSPECT I.

THE farther we go back in history, and the more exactly, and impartially, we enquire into the condition of mankind, in every age; we shall be more fully convinced, that human society, even when it has appeared fairest and most glorious, has never arrived at such grandeur and felicity, as a philosopher might expect, when he considers coolly the reason and genius of mankind, and when he surveys the many rich materials with which nature is abundantly stored, for supplying all their necessities, and satisfying all their desires.

It must indeed be confessed, that a great deal of magnificence and refinement have appeared, in some particular ages and nations. At some times mankind have made

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considerable advances in virtue and in science. Of consequence, they have refined human nature; they have polished human society; they have adorned the globe which they inhabit; and have rendered themselves happy. Yet a curious and exact observer of what has passed on the earth, cannot but acknowledge, that human society has never attained to that magnificence and elegance, and to that virtue, knowledge, and happiness, of which it is truly capable, if men cultivated their genius with due care, and if they made a proper use of those riches which are in nature.

What stores of rich materials, for the use and ornament of human society, are to be found upon the surface, and in the bosom of the earth! What variety and abundance of vegetables and animals doth nature produce! What vastly greater stores would the earth be able to produce if duly cultivated! What plenty is there of wholesome and delicious food! How large provision is made for warm and beautiful cloathing! What various sorts of earth,
wood,

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wood, stones, and metals, are to be found for preparing elegant and magnificent houses, furniture, and utensils! In short, nature has furnished the richest materials, for our comfort; and bestows them on mankind, with an amazing munificence.

Neither is she wanting in her instructions to the sons of men, to make a proper improvement of such mighty advantages. She has endowed them with a discerning spirit, and an acute genius, which teaches them to turn their riches to use for procuring the general happiness of society, and of every individual member of this great community.

At what heights in virtue, knowledge, and felicity mankind may arrive by due culture, may, in some measure, be guessed at from the attainments of some particular persons or nations at some particular times. However, if we only measure the improvements of which men are capable by those which the most exalted of them have made hitherto, we shall fall far short of

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the sum. This may easily be illustrated by a few particular observations.

As numerous as mankind are or have ever been computed to be, they have never been so numerous as might justly have been expected, considering how early both sexes are capable of propagation, to what age this capacity continues, and how many ages have passed since their first appearance upon the earth.

If we compare the antient and modern state of those countries of which we have the most distinct knowledge, we shall find reason to conclude, that several of them were much more populous anciently than they are at present. It will even appear probable that Italy, Greece, Egypt, and other countries which are situated near the Mediterranean sea, contained thrice as many people in proportion to their extent as, after all our boasted improvements, England contains in our age*. This may give

* The question, "whether antient or modern nations have been most populous?" has been considered of late

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give us an idea, but it will only be a faint one, of the vast numbers of men who might have been raised up and maintained by proper care. If I should call them ten times as many as have been actually propagated, I do not conceive I should say any thing beyond the truth.

B. 4

It

late with greater care than formerly. Mr. Hume, in an essay "of the populousness of antient nations, printed 1752," declares on the side of the moderns. The author of a "Dissertation on the numbers of mankind in antient and modern times, printed 1753, with an appendix containing remarks on Mr. Hume's essay," maintains the superior populousness of antiquity. The world are divided in their opinions. A dissertation on a subject nearly related to this, "What causes principally contribute to render nations populous? and what effect has the populousness of a nation on its trade?" was read in the public schools at Cambridge, and was one of those to which prizes were adjudged by the University in the year 1756.. Every one who compares the "Dissertation on the numbers of mankind," with the dissertation read in the public schools at Cambridge, will clearly see how near a resemblance there is between their principles. Could the preference given by so learned a body to the last dissertation be understood as a declaration in favour of the principles maintained in it; the author of the "Dissertation on the numbers of mankind," might account himself highly honoured. But in such cases an University cannot be presumed to give its sanction to the principles of a dissertation merely because it adjudges a prize to it, but only to prefer it to any other on the same subject; or if there was no other to adjudge the prize

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It is true, such great numbers of people must have wanted a much greater quantity of provisions for food and cloathing than the earth has actually produced. But they would not have wanted more than it might have easily produced with due culture. The earth has never been cultivated to the full extent of what it was able to bear. Large tracts of it have produced little or nothing. No country has ever been fully cultivated. Scarce has the small-

prize to it on account of the composition, stile, or some such inferiour merit. For this reason the principles in the "Dissertation on the numbers of mankind, printed in 1753," cannot lay claim to so high a patronage. In truth, after all that has been published on this head, the subject is still very far from being exhausted; nor have the critics such a number of facts set before them, as to be ripe for a decision.

This question is certainly of great moment; it is closely connected with the deepest policy, and merits much greater attention than has been given to it hitherto. Especially, it merits the attention of the British, among whom agriculture and commerce flourish so much. In such a nation it must be a question of the highest importance, whether ever they interfere, or can interfere, and if they do, which of them has the best influence in all respects, and ought therefore to be most encouraged by the legislature, and by every lover of his country.

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est tract been forced to do its utmost, and to produce all that was possible.

However, we might be less concerned for the paucity of mankind, and for the bad culture of the earth, though evident proofs of human weakness, if those who have actually been the inhabitants of our globe had been supported agreeably to the dignity of human nature, and had enjoyed that degree of felicity of which they were truly capable. But, alas! the scanty number of mankind who have actually existed have been poorly provided for, and have been exposed to much wretchedness. A much greater number might have been supported in affluence, with ease to each individual, and might, upon the whole, have been much happier than any particular nations or persons ever have been, if there had been a proper distribution of their labour and of its profits, and if they had happily conspired to promote their mutual felicity. But instead of agreeing in such excellent schemes, they have been fatally diverted to false pursuits by a corruption of taste, and have been woefully engaged

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engaged in opposing and destroying one another. This will deserve a more ample explication afterwards.

As mankind have not been supported with sufficient dignity, considering their real grandeur, and their superiority to other animals, they have made but a small progress in science compared with what they might have done if they had been happily directed to right methods of study, and had got leisure steadily to pursue them. But their genius has never been sufficiently cultivated. Complete plans and proper schemes for acquiring knowledge have never been adjusted. A regular course of study by proper hands, and with all necessary helps, has never been prosecuted. The advancement of knowledge has been in a great degree left to chance. Men's enquiries have been perpetually interrupted. Of consequence, we know but little either of nature or of art, in comparison of what is possible to be known. In particular, we are very ignorant of those numerous and important truths which can only be discovered by accurate observations
regularly

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regularly made in different places and ages, faithfully communicated to contemporaries, and transmitted to posterity. A few examples will show us that this is the case, and that mankind have no reason to be conceited of their attainments in knowledge.

Notwithstanding the mighty advances latter ages have made in astronomy, which teaches us what great things may be accomplished by art and sagacity, our knowledge of the heavenly bodies is still very defective. The theory of comets will not be compleated after several hundred years. We have not made regular observations of the alterations which have happened in the immense regions of the heavens in past ages. We have not exact registers of the stars, which either appear or evanish at different periods. We are uncertain about the distance of the fixed stars, either from us, or from one another. The law concerning the præcession of the æquinoxes, though the præcession itself is an antient discovery, has scarce been fully investigated hitherto. How many other varieties might
be

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be found out by accurate observations? Several things are wanted in the theories of the sun, of the primary and of the secondary planets. There is room for more exact observations of the inclination of the plane of the equator to the ecliptic, of the spots and different appearances in the bodies of the sun, and of his surrounding satellites. We do not know whether their real or apparent diameters are less or greater in different ages: whether their periods, and distances from the earth, or from one another, or the mutual distances of other heavenly bodies and their periods, are always the same: whether the heat of the sun is constant or variable; and if variable, whether it increases or is diminished, and in what proportion: whether the planets and comets have interfered or jostled, or whether such a jostle may be expected or predicted. In short, after all our learned labours, we still stand in need of more accurate observations and more exact astronomical tables.

As to the air, sufficient observations have not been made of the winds, rains, dews, frost,

frost, hail, snows, thunder, aurora borealis, and other phænomena and alterations in this part of nature. Exact registers of their variations in different ages and countries have not been regularly kept, communicated to distant nations, and transmitted from age to age, to lay a foundation for discovering their laws. This would not be an useless labour; for as uncertain as their motions appear, and as difficult as it may be esteemed to reduce them to a calculation, the clouds are certainly balanced; nor is it easy to fix the limits beyond which men cannot go in determining the laws according to which they are directed.

How scanty are our observations of the body of the earth, and of the changes that have happened to it since its first formation? We know not what encroachments have been made upon the land by the seas, lakes, and greater rivers, or what accessions of land have been gained from the waters; whether the heights of the mountains above the neighbouring plains have been always the same; whether new moun-

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mountains, islands, lakes, and rivers, have appeared, what old ones have decayed or wholly evanished, or what havock has been made by earthquakes and eruptions of fire. The longitudes and latitudes of most places are not exactly known; nor whether they continue always the same. A theory has been formed about the difference between the axis of the earth and the diameter of its equator; and, to the honour of our inquisitive age, observations have been carefully made in the most distant regions which confirm this theory. But scarce has any one suspected that there may be a variation in the bulk of the earth itself, and that a great circle passing through the same points is not perhaps always of the same largeness. Many large tracts of the globe, after all our travels and voyages, are still unknown. For ought that we have learned, there may be many great islands, or a vast continent about the south pole. We are almost wholly ignorant of the middle regions of Africk, of the northern and southern extremities of America, and of the east of Asia. The southern parts of Europe, and such other countries

as

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as lye at no great distance from the Mediterranean sea, have been enquired into with some curiosity; but the distant lands towards every point have never been searched with care. We have not even discovered a north-east or north-west passage; nor can we determine whether either of these passages is possible. In truth, notwithstanding the accusations brought against human avarice and curiosity, by the philosophers and poets, sufficient experiments have not been made hitherto upon what is to be found on the surface, or what is contained in the bowels of the earth*.

* *Nondum cæsa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem,
Montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas.
Nullaque mortales, præter sua littora, norant.*

This is part of Ovid's description of the Golden Age.

But in the Iron Age;

*Vela dabat ventis, nec adhuc bene noverat illos
Navita: quæque diu steterant in montibus altis,
Fluctibus ignotis insultavere carinæ.
Nec tantum segetes alimenta que debita dives
Poscebatur humus; sed itum est in viscera terræ:
Quasque recondiderat stygiisque admoverat umbris,
Effodiuntur opes irritamenta malorum
Jamque nocens ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum
Prodierant———* Ovid. *Metamorph. Lib. i.*

Far-

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Further, exact enquiries have not been made into the nature of animals and vegetables, and into the properties and virtues of those other bodies which are found on our globe. We are often as much at a loss about the nearer and smaller, as about the more distant and more bulky objects. We cannot tell how long many animals may, or actually do live; whether the length of their lives, their bulk, and their prolific virtue, have been always the same; or whether, and in what proportion, they vary in different ages, climates and soils. How little is known of giants and dwarfs who are said to inhabit some distant countries? How little curiosity has appeared to examine that visible distinction of men into white and black, and to make useful and innocent trials of the variations which might be produced in a course of generations? Instead of making proper enquiries in order to enlarge our knowledge of the animal œconomy, as if we were children, we only gaze at monsters and animals of an heterogeneous and uncommon shape, though some of them seem to approach to the human

man form. We are ignorant how far the brute animals are capable of instruction, and at what degree of perfection they may arrive. Who can tell how long an oak and many other vegetables may remain in the earth, and what various processes they may undergo from a seed or root till the stump is wholly rotten, and no traces of them appear? How many experiments might be made, not only on vegetable but animal bodies, for penetrating deeper into their various oeconomies, for unravelling the operations of nature, for perfecting the art of medicine? I mean not experiments which may be reckoned whimsical, useless, or cruel; the two first kinds are trifling, the last ought to be abhorred; but experiments which are merciful, useful, and ingenious. Might not the bodies of criminals who have forfeited their lives to the community be made use of for this purpose, with mercy to the criminals and with their full consent*? In short, nature

* See "Lettre sur le progres des sciences," among the works of Monsieur Maupertuis, in which there are many ingenious observations on the defects of our knowledge.

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is still a mystery, after all our accidental discoveries, and most curious enquiries. Hitherto we know but little of the real powers and virtues that are continually operating in the universe.

It cannot indeed be denied, that partly by accidents, partly by the enquiries of ingenious men, many necessary, useful, and agreeable arts have been discovered. Mankind have found out many excellent rules in agriculture, pasturage, and gardening. They have lighted upon many convenient methods of defending themselves from cold, and other inclemencies of the air. They have made fine improvements in their languages. At some particular times they have excelled in poetry, oratory, music, painting, statuary, architecture, geometry, arithmetic, and other ingenious arts. Yet they have never carried their researches so far as their genius would have enabled them in a situation truly proper for making the most important discoveries.

Accord-

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According to the best accounts which history gives of the world, knowledge made but a slow progress during the early ages. This was agreeable to the natural course of things. It must undoubtedly have been a long time before men found leisure and acquired a taste for the study of philosophy and of nature. It was necessary, in the first place, to provide plenty of food, and to secure themselves against the inclemency of the air, and against those attacks from wild beasts, or from one another, which threatened their immediate ruin. Even after their first attempts to philosophise, it must have been long before they fell into a right tract, or learned the proper methods of acquiring real knowledge. They must often have been misled by false scents. They must have met with many stops and hinderances. They must often have gone backwards, and often wandered out of their way. The investigation of the various powers and properties of natural things, by careful observation and experiment, though the most necessary of any thing for enabling men to acquire the most perfect dominion over nature,

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seems to have come latest into vogue, and to have met with the least encouragement from philosophers. Even after the world had been considerably enlightened in other respects, natural philosophy, considered as an enquiry into all the parts of nature, was but little studied. It was certainly but little cultivated before the age of Socrates. However, as surprising as it may appear, it seems evident, that it was better known in his days than ever it was afterwards, till the revival of learning within the last three hundred years. Till this latter period, a stop seems to have been put to enquiries into nature for two thousand years. Before the birth of Socrates, and during the illustrious age in which that philosopher lived, the antients, especially the Greeks, made many fine improvements in language, poetry, oratory, music, painting, statuary, and architecture. It may justly be made a question, whether latter ages have equalled them in any of these fine arts. They also made some useful attempts in moral philosophy and in legislation, but much more has been discovered in natural philosophy within the three last cen-

centuries, than in all the preceding ages. There were not indeed wanting ancient philosophers who were well skilled in geometry and arithmetic; yet except Archimedes, who employed his deep knowledge in mathematics, to contrive wonderful engines for the defence of Syracuse, his native city, no mathematician applied these curious sciences to investigate the laws of nature. The other ancient mathematicians seem to have considered their science as a subject of pure speculation. Apollonius Pergeus, and other great geometers, contemplated the properties of the parabola and ellipsis two thousand years ago, without knowing the uses for which these figures served in the operations of nature. It was reserved to the moderns, especially to the great Sir Isaac Newton, to demonstrate, that all the heavenly bodies moved in the one of these figures, and all projectiles in the other. Such a surprising discovery not only serves as an instance of the benefits that may arise from deep speculations, which are unknown to the vulgar, and are too often ridiculed by some great pretenders to wit and science, but

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furnishes us with an amazing example of those hidden connexions which may be traced in the ways of providence. However, notwithstanding both ancient and modern advances in knowledge, the powers of nature are very imperfectly understood. If mankind had lived in such good correspondence, and in such perfect ease and security as would have suffered them to form regular and extensive plans for proper enquiries into all the parts of nature, and to carry their schemes into execution, in a course of ages they would undoubtedly have made much greater advances in the knowledge of nature than have been made hitherto; and besides all the arts which have already been discovered, they would have invented many others which must have greatly contributed to the support and to the joys of human life.

As for the disorders of the moral kind, it is needless to enlarge upon them at present; they are obvious on the slightest reflection, and it is equally apparent how much they have prevented the true grandeur and real felicity of mankind.

Thus

Thus human society has never arrived at that perfection of which, from the preparations of a wise providence, it seems abundantly capable. We can at least form consistent ideas of much higher improvements and enjoyments.

But here one will be attacked by crowds from every quarter, who will put a thousand questions, and offer a multitude of arguments against the possibility of such improvements. With many, nothing is possible but what they have actually seen or heard of, and all grand schemes of improvement are thought romantic. Many seem to grudge that mankind should either be, or appear to be, more noble than is suitable to the narrow conceptions which they have formed of their constitution. According to such philosophers, the disorders of human appetites and passions render all approaches to perfection in human society wholly impracticable. It is easy, say they, to paint agreeable scenes. We may easily conceive a different order of the natural and moral world. Poets have sung of a perpetual spring, and an air constant-

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ly mild and serene. They have set rivers a running with milk and nectar, and made the earth produce spontaneously all kinds of delicious food. We may fancy universal peace, friendship, virtue, and wisdom. But these delightful scenes have never existed, never shall, nor can they exist but in the poets brain to furnish materials for writers of romance*.

If this is really the case, one cannot help being sorry for it; but this is not the proper place to examine how far such agreeable scenes are possible. It is sufficient to observe at present, that we can form consistent ideas of much higher improvements in human society than have appeared hitherto. However the question concerning the possibility of such a happy state, is of too great importance to be slightly passed over. It deserves an accurate discussion, which will suffi-

* Ver erat æternum, placidique tepentibus auris
Mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores.
Flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant,
Pœna metusque aberant——
Mollia securæ peragebant otia gentes.

Ovid. Metamorph. Lib. I.

ciently

ciently reward our pains; for though perhaps, after all our inquiries, we must rest contented without finding out what we would wish; yet by our searches we shall at least gain a more intimate acquaintance with the human affections and passions. We shall see farther into the nature of society, and penetrate deeper into the methods of the divine providence.

Mean while it is obvious, upon the slightest view, that those political systems, and those maxims of education which have prevailed universally hitherto, are altogether inconsistent with a perfect state of human society. The bad correspondence in which mankind live, the struggles for riches and power among the different nations into which human society is divided, the jealousies among the great, the ambition of kings and princes, their interfering interests, and their bloody wars, destroy millions, and prevent the earth's being fully peopled. Poverty, which discourages great numbers from marrying, by rendering them unable to take proper care of families, is a great hindrance to the increase of

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mankind. Intemperance and debauchery have likewise a most fatal influence. In so far as any prevailing custom, any religious or political maxims, or the instability of public or private affairs discourage marriage, this effectually prevents propagation. The earth can never be fully peopled or cultivated in the best manner, and every spot be made to exert its utmost strength, till it becomes the abode of peace, security, and plenty. Every man must be in such favourable circumstances as to be able to marry to his liking, to maintain his children comfortably, and to place them in such circumstances as may also enable them to marry and to place their children in the same happy condition. We must even suppose a scene, whence not only poverty, but the fear of it, is banished, and where the noise and alarms of war are not heard. As the complete culture of the earth requires vigorous endeavours, idleness must be banished, universal industry must be introduced and preserved, labour must be properly and equitably distributed; every one must be obliged to do his part, and the earth must be cultivated by

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the united labours of all its inhabitants acting in concert, and carrying on a joint design.

Such must be the happy circumstances of the world before human society can reach its highest perfection. And as it must be extremely difficult to establish such wise regulations where private property takes place, it may justly be doubted whether property must not be excluded out of the most perfect government, and, consequently, whether our more perfect idea of society be not entirely chimerical. Where individuals have private property, even when it is rendered as sacred, and is as well secured as human affairs can admit of, it is impossible to prevent many particular tracts of land from coming into the possession of poor, lazy, foolish, or obstinate proprietors, who hinder them from being properly cultivated. Besides, tho' nothing could be too great for a whole community acting by uniform councils, there are particular works and designs necessary both for ornament and use, too grand to be carried on by any private agree-

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agreement. On these accounts it may well be doubted, whether property can be admitted where human society is supposed to be advancing towards the highest perfection.

But be this as it will, it is evident that the most extensive knowledge of nature and art can never be attained in such a turbulent and variable scene as every where presents, and has always presented itself in the world. Peace, stability, and freedom from anxiety, are necessary for carrying our enquiries to a due height. How can the observations that must be made in the most distant countries of the world be safely communicated to contemporaries, or be transmitted to posterity, amidst war and confusion? How can truths be discovered, which require the united observations of thousands of years, when the languages in which these observations are contained are ever fluctuating, and when the strongest towers, and firmest pillars, with all their inscriptions and records, must either gradually decay for want of necessary repairs, or must fall a prey at once

OF HUMAN SOCIETY. 29

once to some furious conqueror who burns cities, plunders provinces, and scarce leaves any traces of their former ornaments or inhabitants.

In order therefore to carry human affairs to that height of magnificence of which we can form a consistent idea, we must suppose government to be greatly altered, and new maxims of education to be introduced. It may be difficult indeed to form a perfect model of such a government or education ; yet it is not impossible to trace out some of its principal lines and characteristics. At any rate the speculation will not be disagreeable, and a diligent search after a perfect constitution, not unlike the search after the philosopher's stone, will abundantly recompence our pains, though such a happy constitution, should at last be found impracticable. Whether this is really the case, will be more distinctly seen in some of the following Prospects.

P R O S-

once to some future conqueror who burns cities, plunders provinces, and leaves any traces of their former ornaments or inhabitants.

In order therefore to carry human affairs to that height of magnificence of which we can form a consistent idea, we must suppose government to be greatly altered, and new maxims of education to be introduced. It may be difficult indeed to form a perfect model of such a government or constitution; yet it is not impossible to trace out some of its principal lines and characteristics. At any rate the speculation will not be disagreeable, and a diligent search after a perfect constitution, not unlike the search after the philosopher's stone, will abundantly recompense our pains, though such a happy constitution should at last be found impracticable. Whether this is really the case will be more distinctly seen in some of the following Propositions.

PROSPECT II.



PROSPECT II.

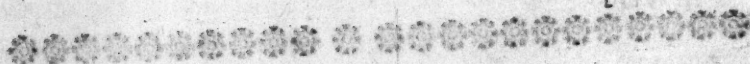
The model of a perfect Government,
not for a single Nation only, but
for the whole Earth.





PROSPECT II.

The model of the British Government,
not for a single nation only, but
for the whole Earth.



PROSPECT II.

AS mankind can neither purchase nor secure what is necessary for their comfortable subsistence without society, so society cannot long continue peaceable and stable without civil government. We may therefore conclude, that government took place very early; and this is confirmed by the most ancient remains of history and tradition.

When we consider what must have been the first institution of government: if there was no miracle in the case, we cannot but imagine something very rude and imperfect, "*Rudis indigestaque moles quam dixere chaos.*" Mankind at first must have united by chance. Being ignorant and wanting experience, they must only have been able to frame some simple

D rules

34 The MODEL of a
rules for preventing mutual injuries, and
for providing supplies for their most ur-
gent necessities.

From this primitive rudeness in the first institution of government we may, in a great measure, derive that imperfection which has attended it in all succeeding ages. This original weakness has been the fatal source of those errors which have unhappily spread far and wide, and have infested all ages and nations. Hence false opinions and corrupt maxims having been early engrafted into the first establishment of society, and having taken deep root thro' length of time, can never be fully eradicated. Particular persons and communities, who, unfortunately for the world, had obtained advantages over others by these original institutions, mischievously employed that authority and interest, which they had accidentally gained, for acquiring an unjust and pernicious power. The community having, perhaps, submitted voluntarily to their first princes and magistrates, without being aware of the consequences arising from the abuse of their
their

PERFECT GOVERNMENT. 35

their power, it became impossible afterwards to prevent the most grievous encroachments arising from this abuse: in-
somuch that after all the revolutions in government which have happened hitherto, it could never be settled with such equity as might have been easily done at first, if mankind had been properly instructed to establish it in an equitable manner.

However, as the world grew older, and a variety of accidents had convinced men of the defects of their more early institutions, they became wiser by experience, and endeavoured to correct and improve their original plans.

Philosophers and lawgivers, both ancient and modern, have signalized themselves by their different models of government, and have taken much pains to frame particular laws for correcting past errors, for preventing future abuses, for preserving the peace, and for promoting the happiness of society. According to their different views of what was principally to be provided for, their schemes have been dif-

36 The M O D E L of a
ferent. Whatever they chiefly intended, whether to secure the virtue and innocence of the citizens, to promote agriculture and pasturage, to introduce a variety of rich manufactures, and to encourage elegance and arts, to render the society peaceable and safe at home, and to prevent that instability which is caused by foreign mixtures, or to make foreign conquests, in order to enlarge their dominions, and to raise a mighty empire; they have endeavoured to adapt their various constitutions to the different objects they had principally in view.

Besides such forms of government as have been actually established, many models have been proposed, which have only existed in the imagination of their projectors: of these the Commonwealth of Plato, the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, and Harrington's Oceana, are the most celebrated, and contain many ingenious observations and useful hints. The fancy of forming new plans of government has not entirely ceased. The ingenious Mr. Hume has very lately given us
his

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his idea of a perfect commonwealth among the rest of his political discourses. There is still room for further trials of this kind. The subject will not be easily exhausted. Old plans may be corrected, and experience may make the world wiser. Why therefore may not a new plan be proposed, especially if it aims at something greater, and can be made more comprehensive than any of the preceding, not being calculated for regulating the affairs of a single people, but for uniting all mankind under governments which shall preserve the same language, maintain an universal correspondence among the most distant inhabitants of the globe, and raise the whole human race to the highest perfection? Let us not immediately take it for granted, that such a government is utterly impracticable. Let us suspend our judgment till once we have considered whether we can conceive a consistent idea of it. After this it will be time enough to pronounce it impossible. This second Prospect exhibits a sketch of such a happy constitution.

As it is absurd to suppose that mankind never had a beginning, * let us imagine, that soon after their first appearance on our globe, when they amounted only to a thousand or ten thousand, or some such small number, they had been formed into a society in which there was to be no property, nor any division of lands for private use; but in place of establishing property, that they had agreed upon a proper and equitable distribution of the labour necessary for cultivating and adorning that spot of earth which they inhabited, and for supporting the whole society in common in an agreeable way. Let us suppose further, that the whole race of mankind who were alive at that time, and were then to be united in one society, had occupied a certain part of the earth consisting of ten thousand or a hundred thousand acres, or any other quantity, greater or less, proportionable to their number; or that they had measured out a tract of land according to the nature of the soil, or the natu-

* In the third Prospect different hypotheses concerning the original of mankind and of human society, are to be considered.

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ral division of the earth by seas, great rivers, or mountains. Suppose this territory to have been able to support a greater number, call it ten times, or a hundred times as many as were in the society when it was first erected. Suppose a regular plan to have been formed of the manner in which this tract of land was to be cultivated and adorned in the best manner, pointing out the situation of the houses, the manner of their architecture and different apartments, with their proper furniture; the methods of laying out the adjacent fields, sowing and planting them with all proper grains, herbs and trees, and storing them with cattle. Suppose this plan to have been as convenient, elegant, magnificent, as the society in these circumstances could be supposed capable of contriving and executing, with the art and skill of which they were masters, or with which the All-wise saw it proper to inspire * them, in order to lay a foundation

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* The word 'inspire' is made use of in this passage, as it may be supposed that the plan of government described in this Prospect, could not have been pro-

tion for the happy government of mankind in after ages. Suppose that this plan was to be carried into execution by all the members of the society, in such sort that none of them should be idle, or wholly exempted from working, nor should any be overburdened, or obliged to such hard and severe labour as might be prejudicial to their health, or indispose them for study and contemplation at proper seasons. Suppose all the members of the society to be executing this plan so as never to want, or to be in danger of wanting abundance of provisions of all kinds for their present comfortable subsistence, while they were gradually carrying on such works as were intended for ornament and magnificence, as well as for use. In a word, let us suppose this society to lay down proper rules for improving their minds in knowledge and virtue, and in this view to oblige their members to work only three or six hours a day, or in a greater or less proportion according to the exigences of the society,

projected or established by mankind, without miracles or a divine inspiration. This will be illustrated afterwards.

leaving

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leaving the rest of the time to be employed in study and contemplation, or in diversions and recreations of any kind, according to every man's humour, or agreeably to some particular rules and statutes consistent with the fundamental maxims of the government.

This is a first draught, or a general sketch of a more perfect constitution than has ever been established among any people.

On this subject one might easily go into a detail, and trace out many particular laws proper for such a society.

I. That some must be chosen to govern, that is, to take care that each of the members be employed in his proper work, and that none transgress the rules of the society.

II. That these governors should be very few in number.

III. That they should not be distinguished from the rest of the society by the elegance or magnificence of their cloaths, houses or tables, but only by a simple badge of their office, without any ornament; as every other member of the society was to have a particular badge of his trade, of the same simple kind.

IV. That these governors were not usually to employ more hours in the oversight of the society than others did in their daily labours.

V. That care should be taken to have always a sufficient number of workmen and artists for the uses of the society, as masons, wrights, weavers, smiths, shoemakers, painters, musicians, statuaries, engravers, and all other persons proper for procuring not only the necessaries of life, but whatever was elegant and magnificent, if it was not fantastick, but agreeable to nature.

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VI. That a council should be appoint for assigning proper trades or employments to each boy and girl at a certain time of life, unless it might be thought more proper to leave every one to their own choice, or to the direction of their parents, without any interposition by the government, except upon some extraordinary occasions.

VII. That in appointing proper trades to all in the society, whether men or women, regard should be had both to the strength of their bodies, and to their particular geniuses and dispositions of mind, as far as they could be discovered.

VIII. That all sorts of useful labour should be honoured, and none of them should be treated with contempt.

IX. That all the males, without exception, should be taught all the parts of agriculture, that every one might be able to give his assistance in seed-time and harvest, and no time might be lost whenever the season proved favourable.

X.

X. That great care should be taken of gardening, pasturage, and fishing.

XI. That hunting and fowling should not be neglected.

XII. That the members of the society should neither be distinguished by their houses, cloaths, nor food, but all of them should enjoy every thing in the same manner, unless where particular distinctions must necessarily arise from differences in the soil, climate, or other circumstances, which rendered a variety proper or unavoidable.

XIII. That there should be masters or teachers of all the particular arts and sciences, to instruct the children at those hours in which the rest of the society were employed in their different kinds of labour.

XIV. That every man should be married between twenty four and twenty six years of age, or within a limited time, according to the nature of the climate,
unless

PERFECT GOVERNMENT. 45

unless he could show a good reason to the contrary before a council appointed to take cognizance of such cases.

XV. That no woman should be married before twenty years of age, or before a certain period suitable to the climate.

XVI. That while a woman was bearing children she should be obliged to no other work than nursing and taking care of them.

XVII. That proper rules should be laid down for taking care of the sick and infirm, and for discharging the aged from all obligation to labour.

XVIII. That there should be proper times for divine service, and proper persons appointed to preside in it, and to give lectures on piety and morality for the comfort and instruction of the people.

It is not necessary to enter upon a more minute detail of particular rules, as every one,

one, either from this short sketch, or from Sir Thomas More's Utopia, may form a thousand constitutions consistent with the fundamental maxims of the society, of which this may be represented as the sum:
" That there should be no private pro-
" perty. That every one should work for
" the public, and be supported by the
" public. That all should be on a level,
" and that the fruits of every one's labour
" should be common for the comfortable
" subsistence of all the members of the
" society. And, lastly, that every one
" should be obliged to do something, yet
" none should be burdened with severe la-
" bour."

As long as mankind live in peace and a good correspondence, and have abundance of room and provisions, they will encrease and multiply. Under a government framed according to the preceding model, they must multiply much faster than under the happiest government that ever was actually established. Let us therefore suppose them increasing till the tract of earth which they had at first laid out for a habitation,

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bitation, though cultivated in the best manner, could no longer support them. Upon this they might make choice of another tract of land greater or less, as they found it convenient, or according to the natural division of the earth by seas, rivers, or mountains. This second territory they might people with as numerous a colony as they pleased, establishing a government founded on the same equitable maxims with the former. When this new government was fully peopled, there would be nothing to hinder them from founding a third and a fourth, and from going on continually in erecting new societies as often as they found it necessary or expedient.

In founding those new governments care might be taken,

1. That they should neither be too small nor too great. Perhaps fifty or a hundred miles in diameter, might be a sufficient extent, with an elegant and magnificent city near the center, from which noble roads should extend in straight lines to the extremity of that jurisdiction, with pleasant villages

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villages situated near the roads and all
over the fields.

2. These different governments might
either be of the same or of a different ex-
tent, as should be found most convenient.

3. Such governments might be erected,
not only when the old were in danger of
being overstocked, but also on other oc-
casions, and might either be settled in the
neighbourhood of the more antient go-
vernments, or at a greater distance, as
might be judged most proper.

4. Such new colonies might be formed
with such a various mixture of people from
the old, that a regular and good correspon-
dence, as well as the same language, might
be perpetually preserved.

5. In order to strengthen this good cor-
respondence, a plan might be devised for a
regular migration of inhabitants from one
climate to another, not only without any
inconvenience, but to the great pleasure
and profit of the citizens.

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I need not go further into a detail, what is already observed is sufficient to give an idea of the whole. These are the out-lines which might be filled up in a thousand different methods.*

Whatever objections may be raised against a plan of this nature, it cannot be denied, that such a government is very proper for mankind, considered as rational animals. In entering into society such animals ought not only to provide for their mutual necessities, for their mutual security, and for the enjoyment of the pleasures which flow from fellowship and friendship, but should have a view to their mutual improvements and more speedy advances in useful arts and sciences. Clear and extensive knowledge is the glory of men as rational creatures. The la-

* The first idea of the government described in this Prospect, was taken from Sir Thomas More's Utopia. But as that ingenious author confined his plan to one particular people, a scheme is proposed for establishing such equitable governments over the whole earth. This enlarges our views, and will give occasion afterwards to several useful reflections, when the consequences of all such plans are fairly considered.

bour of animals is not only necessary for procuring food and other conveniencies, but also for preserving health, and for keeping the animal œconomy in vigour and repair. Mankind cannot cultivate the earth to so great advantage separately, as by their joint labours. Knowledge is most successfully acquired by united endeavours. In modelling society, regard ought to be had to all these ends: labour ought not to be so fatiguing, or of so long continuance, as to weaken the body, or to destroy a taste for knowledge; or to leave no time, nor to give proper opportunities for acquiring it; but ought to be so equitably divided among all the members of the society, that no particular person may be overburthened, and that every one may both have time and proper means for acquiring knowledge.

How defective are all the plans of government which have ever been actually established! How miserably has the good end of government been defeated! How little care has been taken either of the souls or of the bodies of men! What are
great

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great numbers of the poor but slaves and beasts of burthen to the rich! In what ignorance do multitudes live! To what severe labours are they subjected! How hard do they toil, yet how scanty and unwholesome is their diet! In what nasty cottages do they live! How few of the comforts of life fall to their share! How many have died by hunger and painful diseases, being cruelly neglected by their fellow creatures! Yet all these unhappy mortals were as much qualified by nature as the most fortunate of their kind, for a more agreeable life and nobler enjoyments. What government so fit for men, as that which equally provides for the happiness and improvement of the whole species? *

* However much we may admire what is purely spiritual, and prefer the enjoyments of reason to those of sense, yet nature having endued us with a taste for beauty and magnificence in sensible objects, it is unnatural to despise all elegance and grandeur. 'Tis indeed as foolish and absurd to deny the pleasures arising from sensible objects to be good, as to deny bodily pains to be evil. In both cases one only struggles against nature, and struggles in vain. Would we form the idea of the most perfect society of rational animals, we must suppose that due care is taken both of the body and mind. By the constitution of the animal œconomy, exercise is necessary for preserving health, and for giving a more

lively relish to every enjoyment; nature therefore obliges us to bodily exercises. Now what exercises can be more proper than those by which we provide first for the necessaries, and in the second place, for the ornaments and delicacies of life? In the most perfect constitution of society, exercise alone, as distinguished from severe labour, would be sufficient to purchase both. Thus nature, by making exercise and not labour necessary for procuring the comforts of life, points out that labour ought to be avoided as unnecessary, and even contrary to nature; and that every individual ought to have time and opportunities afforded him for cultivating his mind. By rendering labour painful while exercise is a pleasure, it teaches human society to pursue no sensible pleasures but those which can be purchased solely by the exercise of all its members, without the labour of any of them. Thus it has set a proper boundary to our taste of beauty and grandeur, and forbids fantastical pleasures. But, unfortunately, we have run into extremes on both hands. The great bulk of mankind have either been condemned to severe labour in order to procure the necessaries of life, and have not had time to cultivate their minds, or they have busied themselves, without necessity, in pursuing a fantastic elegance and magnificence; while some philosophers and law-givers, on the other hand, launch out too much in praises of simple nature and uncultivated life, unjustly discarding all elegance and magnificence in sensible objects, as superfluous, and contrary to the design of nature.

See Seneca in his 90th Epistle, and Plutarch in the life of Lycurgus.

PROS.



PROSPECT III.

Whether Government, according to the preceding Model, ever could have been, or ever can be established and maintained in the World.



PROSPECT III.

WHILE my readers have been amusing themselves with the preceding sketch of human society, some of them, no doubt, have been tempted to laugh at my simplicity in taking any trouble to adjust systems of this nature. How easy is it (will they say) to form the preceding scheme, as well as a thousand others? But is this fine system practicable? Could it ever have been established in times past? Can it be established at present, or in times to come? Or being once established in any nation by some unaccountable concurrence of circumstances, could it possibly be preserved, or be made to exert its full influence during any considerable time? Is not such a scheme entirely inconsistent with the passions and appetites of mankind? And if it is of this

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kind, what folly in spending time or
thought in such chimerical speculations?

It would be surprizing indeed, if objections of this kind should not start up in the mind. No wonder though a constitution so different from any which has ever been established, should be thought chimerical. It is neither safe nor modest to pronounce dogmatically that such plans are practicable. Nay, we are not absolutely certain that on the whole they might not produce great inconveniencies and increase evils instead of remedying them. How different are our contemplations from the truth of things discovered by a long train of experience! It will not, however, be disagreeable nor unprofitable to take a nearer view, and to consider,

I. Whether it was possible, at the beginning of the world, or in any period since the beginning; whether it is possible at this time, or ever will be possible, to establish such a government and education?

II.

II. Supposing such a government once to be established, whether it could be preserved during any considerable length of time?

If we give credit to ancient historians, Lycurgus perswaded the Lacedemonians to agree to something of this kind, for they suffered their whole lands in Laconia, except such as belonged to the citizens of Sparta, to be divided into 30,000; and those which belonged to Sparta into 9,000; or as others say into 6,000, or according to a third party into 4,500 equal shares, and allotted them to a proportionable number of their citizens. I shall not call in question a history delivered down from the ancients with such solemnity. We ought not always to measure ancient by modern nations. But supposing the fact to be true, it is certain that the circumstances of that country in the age of Lycurgus, must have been very different from the circumstances of civilized nations in our age. It would be impossible at present to persuade any civilized nation whatsoever to agree to such a distribution. The rich and powerful

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erful part of the people have too many advantages above others ever to part with them, and put themselves on a level with their inferiors. In truth, no such generosity nor self-denial can be expected, nor ought to be demanded. Different maxims of government, different customs and notions are too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated in any ordinary way. One would be a madman to attempt it. Though Lycurgus and Solon, Plato and Aristotle, Demosthenes and Cicero, Sir Thomas More and Harrington, with all the ancient and modern philosophers, law-givers and orators, were to appear together, and endeavour to persuade the inhabitants of Great Britain, or France, to establish such a government, their efforts would be in vain. In order to bring about such a grand revolution, there would be a necessity for real miracles and inspiration, or for pretences to them, in imitation of Lycurgus, Minos and Numa; or at least for such a high strain of patriotism or enthusiasm as cannot reasonably be expected. If any such equal government is possible at present, according to the ordinary course of

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can be established. 59

affairs, it must be erected in some wild and uncultivated country, where there are few inhabitants. This observation may be applied to all the ancient ages and nations; for it must have been extremely difficult to erect such a government in any ancient nation after the maxims which are contrary to the genius of it had prevailed widely, and taken firm root in the minds of men.

- Neither could such a government have been erected at the beginning of the world without a miracle. This will be found to be equally true, whatever system we follow concerning the original of human affairs.

In the first place, if we suppose, agreeably to the common system, that all mankind are sprung from one original pair, framed immediately by God in full maturity; that our first parents were formed entirely innocent, of the best dispositions, with understandings clear and distinct, with wills perfectly complying with the will of God, and with appetites and passions
I wholly

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wholly under the command of reason; we need not enquire what would have been the consequences with respect to civil government; or if our first parents and their posterity had always continued in a state of innocence, whether what is now called civil government would have been either necessary or suitable to human nature; or supposing that civil government is absolutely necessary for rational animals in their most perfect state, it will not be necessary to enquire what kind of government this must have been, as the same system of divinity teaches us, that our first parents did not continue long in this happy state, but lost both their innocence and wisdom very early, even long before there was any necessity of erecting civil government, properly so called. Since therefore civil government was not erected in the state of innocence, but in the degeneracy of the world; and since its first projectors must have been destitute of experience, the beginning of it must certainly have been very rude and imperfect, according to this system. It is true, it is asserted, that it was originally of divine institution; but
this

can be established. 63

this is only to be understood of its general nature, for it is not pretended that all its rules were appointed immediately by God.

If, abstracting from the common system of divinity, we indulge ourselves in framing conjectures concerning the original of civil society, we will never be able to lay a sure foundation for raising any tolerable superstructure. One thing indeed is certain, that mankind were not from eternity, but must have had a beginning. There is nothing in the appearances or history of mankind on this earth, to give us an idea of eternity. All the appearances are on the other side, and nothing seems more absurd than an eternal succession of men by propagation, without a first man. This appeared so great an absurdity to the late Lord Bolingbroke, that with all his scepticism he could not digest it, but hath taken a great deal of pains to refute it; and by many ingenious observations hath shewn, that mankind, and all other animals, had a beginning on this earth. As this is undoubtedly true, it is evident that the order of nature, at

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the beginning of the human kind, must have been entirely different from what it is at present, or, in other words, must have been miraculous. This cannot be denied by the greatest sceptics, whatever aversion they have to miracles. Without a miracle; that is, without an immediate interposition of supernatural power, the present order of the world can never be explained.

This being once established, and a supernatural interposition found necessary, it is certainly ridiculous and absurd to represent the beginning of mankind so extremely low as some have affected to describe it, or to imagine mankind, when they made their first appearance, to have been produced by a big-bellied oak, or formed by the heat of the sun out of a warm and slimy soil. The representation of the elegant poet is far from being natural.

Cum prorepserunt primis Animalia terris,
Mutum ac tûrpe pecus, glandem, atque Cubilia propter,
Unguibus, hinc pugnis, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis, quae post fabricaverat usus :

Donec

can be established.

63

Donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
Nominaque invenere: dehinc absistere bello,
Oppida coeperunt munire, & ponere leges,
Ne qui fur esset, neu latro, neu quis adulter. *

On the other hand, if we abstract from revelation, and indulge in our conjectures, we have no reason to imagine mankind to have been formed so perfect at first, that they could, on a sudden, comprehend the most perfect model of government. It must have been by slow degrees that mankind attained the idea of a regular society, and of every thing that was necessary for the support, delight, and ornament of human nature. Nay, though we suppose the first of our kind to have been formed in innocence, and even in great perfection, altogether unlike a "mutum ac turpe pecus," yet they must have wanted experience, and without experience, or some new faculties analagous to it, or a divine inspiration, they could not, during a great length of time, have formed a just idea of the art of governing, or of the best maxims in politics. During many years,

* Horat. Lib. i. Sat. 3.

nay

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may ages, they might have been ignorant not only of such deeper schemes, but of many other things more easily invented, which were necessary for the comfort of human life.

Abstracting from divine revelation we must have very imperfect conceptions of the first state of mankind, and of the time when, and the manner in which vice entered into the world. But whatever high notions we may form of men's innocence and purity at first; experience teaches us that they degenerated afterwards. Whether therefore, an idea of civil government was conceived in what may be called a state of innocence, or afterwards, it must have been imperfect at first. If before the depravity of mankind, the original plan could not fully answer in a state vicious and depraved; if after their innocence had been corrupted, many weak and wrong maxims must have been introduced, and have taken such firm root as would have rendered a perfect government altogether impracticable, till mankind by slow degrees, and after many trials,

can be established.

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als were taught by their experience, and by feeling the defects of their imperfect plans, were naturally led to a more perfect constitution.

Thus it appears, that a perfect government founded on equality, could not have been established at the beginning of the world, without a miracle.

It may, however, be allowed, if any such thing ever existed as that *state of nature* which some poets and philosophers have imagined, when men like other animals ranged thro' the fields without civil government; that, at the expiration of this state, mankind, instead of appropriating particular possessions to individuals, might have been led, by some lucky accidents, to have established societies, on the foundation of an original contract, mutually to assist and defend each particular member, in labouring for the general good of the community, in order to share mutually in the profits of every one's labour, and that such societies, though rude and imperfect at the

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beginning, might have laid the foundation of governments similar in many respects to that projected by Sir Thomas More, and might have gradually given a turn to men's inclinations and humours, which would have as effectually prevented the establishment of private property, as the violent inclination towards property has hitherto prevented the establishment of a constitution founded on a perfect equality.

Such a supposition includes nothing impossible. Chance must have had a prodigious influence in the first institution of government, and a thousand unknown accidents concurred to turn the attention of mankind either one way, or the contrary. The idea of appropriating particular tracts of the earth, which were originally common to the whole species, though easy and natural to us, may be supposed rather to have appeared unnatural at the beginning. Nothing therefore hinders us to conceive that men might have been originally led to a model of society,

can be established. 67

ciety, without any establishment of property.

But whether it was, or it was not possible at the beginning, to have established such a government, it may be very possible to do it in some future period without any miraculous interposition. In particular, there are two things which, according to the natural course of human affairs, may give occasion to erect such a society.

First, it is possible to establish it even in a civilized country, by means of an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, at the time of a grand revolution. On such an occasion, a spirit for patriotism and a love of equality may be accidentally raised, and run high. It may chance to be conducted by men of eminence in the state: such as are sprung from noble or from royal blood, like Lycurgus of old, may cheerfully give their assistance, and by their example and authority, engage others in the grand design. Multitudes may be willing to lay down their honors and lucrative employments,

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and place themselves on a level with the people. The humour may run so fast, and the tide bear so strong, that none shall venture to go against it. A whole nation may be smitten with a generous enthusiasm to sacrifice all private interests to the public good. None of these things are impossible. Enthusiasm has produced as surprizing effects on former occasions.

But this is not the only method in which such a constitution may be established. A second is no less possible. A select society of rich Europeans of honest hearts and extensive views, by some particular accidents may become enamoured of such an equal government: they may form a design to give it a beginning, and to try an experiment. Resolving to retire into a country not formerly inhabited, they may persuade their friends and relations to follow them. By considerable rewards, and by the prospect of an easier and more agreeable settlement, they may engage a goodly number of honest and ingenious artists of different kinds to go along with them. They may

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may carry with them great stores of provisions, and all sorts of materials and instruments necessary for their new colony. Concord and wisdom may attend their councils, and Heaven may bless them: Thus they may be able to lay the foundation of an equal government, which being once settled, may happily take such root, and become so powerful, as at first to extend itself to the utmost verge of these uncultivated lands where it was originally settled. Afterwards, by its fair example, it may allure the neighbouring nations to copy after such an excellent model, till at last such governments shall overspread great tracts of the earth, and overcome whatever would oppose them. The advantages of such a constitution may stir up the subjects of the most powerful monarchies to become zealous for such an equitable plan. Their monarchs and great men, may be obliged to give up their prerogatives, and yield to the general desires of the people.

Thus I imagine it possible to establish such a government in some future times,

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but the probability of doing it is so small, and the prospect is so distant, that modern statesmen will not apprehend any danger to their present systems. In truth, most modern politicians have such confined views, and so little grandeur in their schemes, that they imagine things of much less difficulty to be wholly impracticable. Nay, which is more to be lamented, discard all patriotism, as if it had not any solid foundation in human nature.

It may be observed further, that if the great governor of the world intends to establish such an equitable government, it is perfectly agreeable to the profound wisdom and mysterious workings of his providence, to accomplish this design slowly, imperceptibly, and by intricate operations. He could easily accomplish it at once by miracles, or inspiration ; but he does not commonly make choice of supernatural, but of natural methods. There is certainly the most perfect harmony in all the divine councils: the means which God employs, concur in producing the designed effect in the most proper season

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and manner. Yet there is often an apparent discord in the methods of his procedure. 'Tis often by violent oppositions and discord, that the most perfect concord is at last established.

Thus, if it is the intention of the divine wisdom to carry human society to the greatest perfection of which it is capable on this earth, by means of a perfect government, the design may be laid so deep, and be carried on so slowly, as to require many ages for its accomplishment. 'Tis liker art than nature, to form things in their greatest perfection at once. Neither trees, nor corn, nor flowers, grow up to maturity in a day. They increase imperceptibly, and go through various processes. 'Tis only after long periods, that some vegetables arrive at their greatest strength and glory. The more perfect the vegetable, the process is longer and more various. Nature observes a similar analogy in the brute animals. Nor does man arrive at perfection, but by a course of exercise and discipline. How weak and tender are his first rudiments in the womb,

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or at his birth! How imperfect is his infant state! In the bloom of youth, he has not attained his due consistency. Manhood, nay old age, are necessary before he can grow up to full maturity; much less (may we justly presume) will the society of men be perfected at once. The most perfect coalition of the most perfect animals, is too grand a design to be speedily compleated. The seeds may be laid so deep, as not to blossom till after many ages. The blossoms may often be nipped by the rigour of the seasons. The fruit may appear late, and an extraordinary season may be necessary before it is fully ripened. Philosophers and law-givers may perhaps arise in different ages and nations, to conceive the idea of perfect governments. Descriptions may be made of them, and be left to posterity. Errors may be detected, and remedies proposed. Different schemes may be explained. A perfect system may happily be found out. Grand revolutions in nations may give it a beginning, and a constitution may at length be settled, which is founded on a perfect equality. Such a
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government, being once established in any particular nation, may, like ancient Rome, but without her enormous ambition, extend its influence to the most distant nations, and cause a total revolution in the notions, dispositions, and affairs of mankind. All which would, in some respects, be more wonderful than if such a government had been set up at the beginning of the world, or had been framed at once, and established by miracles in any succeeding period.

But, supposing that governments of such an extraordinary nature, should actually be established by a series of unaccountable accidents; what shall be thought of their duration? Can they have a solid foundation? Or, are the maxims on which they are built, consistent with the natural passions and appetites of mankind? This is the second question: to which many will answer in the negative, though they may possibly admit, that such governments may, or might have been, settled accidentally through some extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, or
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through a high strain of enthusiasm after some grand revolution. Allowing (will they say) that the great men who had the principal hand in the revolution, had generously yielded up their superiority, and condescended to put themselves on a level with the people; such a high strain of patriotism could not continue long in vigour. The selfish passions of mankind, and their natural love of superiority, though laid asleep at a particular conjuncture, would soon be roused up again, and becoming as restless as ever, would prevail over the weaker efforts of patriotism and a public spirit.

In determining a case so nice and curious, it may seem too bold an assertion that such a government could never degenerate from its primitive purity. All human constitutions seem liable to corruption. Whatever vigour they promised at first, after a certain period they begin to decay. They lose that high spirit with which they were originally actuated. They languish by degrees, till either they are resolved into their first principles, and like
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animal bodies, renew their strength by some mighty convulsion; or till they are at last dissolved by a violent shock which utterly destroys their frame and constitution.

But, though all constitutions may decay; why may not this form be as durable as any other? There seems to be nothing in the human frame which is inconsistent with the proposed equality, so fundamental in our perfect government; but either,

1. Emulation, envy, a desire of distinction, or, as it may be expressed, the love of pre-heminence, power, or dominion; all which may be reduced to the same principle, and is called ambition.

2. The love of ease or sensual pleasure.

3. The love of liberty.

4. Interfering passions and appetites, which excite violent struggles by men's fixing

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fixing their affections on the same objects, which can only be enjoyed by one or by a few.

These are the only principles in human nature which seem contrary to an equal distribution of labour among mankind, and to their equal enjoyment of the advantages which flow from it. I shall examine whether their influence is so pernicious as continually to disturb, and, at last, to be able to overturn the most excellent plan which is founded on equality.

1. Emulation, ambition, or the desire of distinction and superiority, must be confessed to be one of our passions. Perhaps it is among the strongest. It is certainly deeply rooted in human nature, and cannot be eradicated. But under an Utopian constitution, there is no necessity that it should; nor indeed, that it should be any weaker than it is at present; since it may be fully gratified, though in a different manner; and since it is not the prin-

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principle itself, but the object about which it is exercised, that would be varied under such a government.

- It is true, many methods by which we distinguish ourselves, and obtain honour under our present models of government, could have no place under a different form, but other distinctions would supply their room, and be in as high a reputation. All those distinctions would remain which are founded on any real virtue or excellency; and those only be wanting which have arisen and grown up from imperfect and confused, or from false and unjust conceptions of worth and dignity, contracted by a bad education under imperfect governments, and preserved by the influence of false discipline and corrupted institutions.

It must be confessed, that in all ages mankind have been passionately fond of the distinctions which arise from elegant and magnificent houses, rich furniture, sumptuous cloathing, costly and luxurious tables, numerous attendants, and splendid

78 Whether a PERFECT GOVERNMENT did equipages. Princes have been ambitious to be the masters of large dominions and great armies, and to have an absolute uncontrollable power. Those of an inferior rank, have ardently wished to be favourites at court, or to be idolized by the people. But, it will not follow that under a government where there is no room for such distinctions, mankind would have the same notions of pre-heminence. Whatever is attended with honour in any country, and under any constitution, will be passionately desired; but where there is no room for distinction, emulation cannot have a place. If we had never heard of a coach and six, or if it had been common to all men, where could there have been a foundation of annexing the idea of superior honour to such a machine? If all men's houses, cloaths, and tables are, and must always be equally good; whence could arise the idea of distinction in things of this nature? Our false notions of this kind, flow from our folly under our imperfect governments, in which we may use or abuse our property as we fancy. Hence a weak man becomes proud, and
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overvalues himself on account of a better house or table. Under our governments, there is an advantage in such superiority. We may display a good understanding and taste, and even a good disposition of heart by such distinctions. But though we suppose the love of pre-heminence ever so strong among the Utopians, they could never discover it, nor could they be tempted to discover it by finer houses, cloaths or tables, which must all be equally good; or by a retinue of servants, when there are none in the country; or by power and influence over a free people altogether unsuitable to their maxims and polity, among whom the employment of a magistrate or overseer, is not more honourable than that of others, and only creates a greater respect in the same manner in which all other employments create a respect, by a faithful and diligent discharge and attendance.

Under every government, much depends upon the maxims and customs which have once been established, and have taken a firm root. According to
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common opinion, many useful and necessary employments amongst us, carry along with them an idea of baseness; nor can men of narrow minds, or such as have never seen or heard of different manners, divest themselves of violent prejudices against them, though there is not any real baseness in such employments.

But under our equal government, all useful trades are honoured. The more laborious they are, "*cæteris paribus*," they are more highly honoured. Easier and less fatiguing employments, are less respected, unless attended with a proportionably greater diligence. Magistracy, which is nothing but the oversight of others, and under a sound constitution would be among the easiest tasks, would probably procure less regard than what would give less trouble. Even under our imperfect governments, 'tis not so much the labour in itself which excites the idea of meanness, as the circumstances of the persons who are engaged in it. The ignorance of the vulgar, their narrow views, the nastiness of their cottages, their ragged cloaths,

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cloaths, their scanty tables, and other things of a like nature, are the chief causes which disgrace their employments. Agriculture is in itself the most necessary employment. In certain ages and countries, it has been in high honour. It is not the labour and dirt which attend it, that create the contempt with which it is accompanied at present: else why should not the same contempt be poured on other employments, which not only require toil, but bespatter the cloaths and harden the skin. The distinction arises from the characters and circumstances of the persons who are employed in it. In general, labour is so far from drawing down contempt on those who labour, that it procures honour; nay, greater honour in proportion to the greatness of the toil.

If we view things in this light, it will be evident, that where a whole people may be equally wise, where there is not any trade which unfits a man for knowledge, where none are worn out by severe labour, where each person employs only certain hours of the day in some useful

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business, and may have as fine and elegant a taste, as gentle and polite manners, and spend the rest of his time as agreeably, and with as much ease as any other person, no man's employment can fall into contempt in such circumstances. Do not we see, amidst all our follies and false conceptions, that rich tradesmen of good sense, and agreeable conversation, are much respected, though they have slaved a great deal in their youth, and continue to undergo a great deal of toil on necessary occasions? Do not all wise men prefer them to the richest fool who never spent a day in useful labour, nor ever dirtied his cloaths in his whole life?

Hence we may be convinced, that the ideas of men who have been born and educated under an equal government, must be very different from the idle conceits which have grown up among us, through the licentiousness of our manners. We may easily see that the Utopians may be very well satisfied with that equality of conditions which is suitable to their own customs, as they cannot have the same ideas

ideas of those distinctions which so much disturb mankind under other governments. In truth, all such distinctions would be as unsuitable to their manners, as they are suitable to ours; and the affectation of such distinctions under their form of government, must be no less unnatural, ridiculous, odious and dangerous, than attempts to destroy them under such governments as ours.

Further; where men do not interfere, and have no opposite interests, envy ceases. No man envies his neighbour the serenity or freshness of the air, plenty of cool water, or any of the comforts of life which we enjoy in common. If our interests do not interfere, we rather rejoice in the general happiness. If all the members of a commonwealth could live in an easy and agreeable way; if they were lodged, cloathed, and fed in the same convenient manner, they would have no temptation to seek pre-heminence by advantages of this kind.

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At the same time, we need not suppose them to be without ambition, nor can objects be wanting to satisfy it. The strength and beauty of the body naturally entitle men to regard. Greater sagacity and quickness of the understanding command respect wherever they appear. Men especially, may distinguish themselves under all governments whatsoever, by their virtues, by the superior graces of their character, by their greater diligence in acquiring knowledge and wisdom, by a peculiar activity in their particular employments, by their higher talents in poetry, painting, statuary, oratory, music, architecture, and in all other arts intended either for ornament or use. In truth, it must be as natural under an Utopian government, to seek honour in such righteous and useful pursuits, as to court distinction under other constitutions, by those foolish and destructive practices, which can only be esteemed on account of a general bad taste and depravity of manners. Nay, the subjects of an Utopian government, must be more powerfully excited to distin-

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distinguish themselves by their superior wisdom and virtue; as they have no other methods of gratifying their ambition.

This is one of the peculiar advantages of such a constitution. It produces wisdom and virtue, as naturally as our imperfect governments produce vice and folly. All its maxims and rules conspire to this excellent purpose.

Thus a government, once happily established upon an equitable footing, may be as durable as any other, notwithstanding the love of distinction, and the powerful principle of ambition so conspicuous in human nature.

2. Such a constitution will not be much in danger from men's love of ease and sensual pleasure, and from their natural aversion to toil and hard labour.

It is, indeed, natural for men to love ease, and to wish that others may rather be obliged to hard labour. Yet it is no

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less true, that mankind will undergo the greatest toils, submit to the most severe labours, and will encounter the most imminent dangers from a sense of duty, for the sake of honour and glory, or from a prospect of more lasting advantages. Now the Utopians would have the most powerful motives of this kind, to excite them to fulfil their daily tasks with chearfulness.

The contempt which would follow on idleness, and a refusal to do their duty; the love of their country, and constitution; the plenty which they would enjoy; the examples of industry, that would be every where before their eyes, and that perfect equality which would take place, must be powerful arguments to engage them to diligence. They would sweeten their labours and prevent murmuring; and what is chiefly to be considered, all being employed, and idleness entirely banished, their hardest labours may easily be endured, and are only proper exercises for preserving the health of their bodies, and the vigour of their minds.

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Further; in order to prevent strife, there is such an equitable distribution of labour, that when the work is more severe, the time of working is made shorter. Notwithstanding the mildness of their government, there must be a justice and steadiness in the administration, unknown to more imperfect constitutions. Their laws are not without powerful sanctions, to curb the refractory and rebellious. If a spirit of indolence, or pride, should raise up a faction in their country, to exempt themselves from labour, their constitution is better calculated than any other to give check to it, since such a faction having nothing plausible or specious in its pretences, must be extremely odious, and can scarce be supposed to become formidable. In fine, to prevent the possibility of quarreling, and to take away all pretences of murmuring, if any shall scruple to undertake more severe, or more unhealthful labours than what are ordinary, when they are necessary for the state; or shall be unwilling to make a dangerous voyage, or to take up their residence for a time, in a barren, unhealthful,

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ful, or disagreeable climate, (though on account of the superior honours, which are justly bestowed on whatever can be reckoned heroism, such scruples must be very rare) yet if ever there is any necessity, they determine the case by lot; after which, every one cheerfully submits; it being reckoned one of the most fundamental maxims of their religion and polity to acquiesce in what is considered as the command and determination of providence.

3. After having explained the consistency between an Utopian constitution, and our natural love of honour, ease and pleasure, it will not be necessary to bring a long proof, that the love of liberty is not dangerous to our equal government.

Liberty is more or less restrained under every government. Nor ought it any where to be less restrained, than is necessary for the public good. There may be too much as well as too little liberty; and under all other governments, except the Uto-

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Utopian, there is either too little or too much.

In the greatest part of the world, so little regard has been shewed to liberty, that mankind have been subjected to absolute monarchs from generation to generation. This fatal and absurd policy, has too much prevailed in all ages. Scarce was any other government ever known in the East; and great efforts have been made by princes and their ministers, to reduce Europe to the same slavish subjection. However, slavery could never be firmly established in the West. It was chiefly under the Roman Empire, that Liberty was subdued in Europe. It had flourished greatly in the more ancient ages. The nations which destroyed the Roman Empire, however barbarous in other respects, were favourers of free governments. Though they had kings with some high prerogatives, yet certain powers were also invested in the nobles, and in other orders of the state, by which the authority of their kings was limited. Thus, jurisdictions were ballanced, and liberty was in
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some measure secured, 'till the ambition of princes gradually breaking through these limitations, too successful attempts have been made in modern times to re-establish despotism. Nay, within the three last centuries, slavery has even been reduced to a system. This slavish system has been openly avowed. Instead of being ashamed of slavery, an abject spirit of submitting to tyranny, and holding the authority of tyrants sacred, has been reputed honourable. Hence the many strenuous defenders of the absolute power of princes, of the indefeasible right of their heirs to succeed to their despotic power, and of the unlawfulness of resisting them in any case, or upon any pretence whatsoever. This is the system, which, under the notion of supporting loyalty, asserting the rights of Princes, preserving peace, preventing faction, and rendering society more stable, some noted philosophers have maintained to be agreeable to nature, historians to be confirmed by experience, lawyers to be established in law, and divines to be founded on the gospel. Nay, these last gentlemen have enforced it upon
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our consciences, under the pain of eternal damnation. A few nations excepted, this monstrous system is at this very moment received in all the kingdoms of this earth, and has spread its baleful influence far and near. Such has been the wretched condition of the greatest part of the world.

In governments of this kind, the monarch seldom indulges his subjects in any liberty, but what promotes some real or imaginary advantage to himself and his favourites. In other cases, he allows his people to be as wicked and wretched as they please. What else can be expected? Such tyrants, and their ministers can scarce be supposed to have any idea of a public, and of modelling governments for the public benefit.

But even in those few countries where this doctrine has been exploded, and where law-givers have taken care to provide against absolute and arbitrary power in the hands of a monarch, by dividing authority among different persons and bodies

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dies politic; scarce have they aimed at any thing further than to secure the people against oppression by the governours, and to punish a few heinous crimes. Even under free governments, due attention has not been given to the education of the youth; nor has such an excellent discipline, and such wise forms of living, been established, as might have prevented crimes, and trained up the subjects to wisdom and virtue.

Such an excellent polity has indeed been greatly neglected in all ages. Sufficient care has never been taken to form manners, to introduce right fashions, to curb appetite, to guard against a baneful subjection, to the irregularity of passion, and to excite generous and noble sentiments. Fashion and law, have pointed different ways. One practice has been reputed legal, and the contrary honourable. Yet all ages have not been equally faulty. Ancient law-givers had nobler aims than modern statesmen, and showed a greater desire to secure the virtue of the people. They attempted at least, to regulate manners.

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ners. They made it evident, that they comprehended this under the idea of government. They endeavoured, how unsuccessfully soever, to train up men to virtue. But the moderns, though they profess to lay down rules for education, and would not be thought to neglect what is so important, have not had such just views of this matter as the ancients. They have scarce considered education as belonging to the public. They have left the instruction of youth, and the distribution of trades and employments, to parents, or to every one's own fancy. Too great regard is shown to the rank, or the riches of the parent. Too much indulgence is given to inclination and humour. The people in general are not laid under such proper and wholesome restraints, as are equally profitable to themselves, and are necessary to make them co-operate towards the general good. The ancients did too little in this way, but the moderns much less; and now, under the very best governments, rich men are allowed to spend their time and their money, to do something or nothing, to marry, or to abstain from

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from marriage, and to educate their children as they please. About all these things, though of the greatest importance, even free governments seem to be too little anxious; leaving the people to be idle, lewd, and voluptuous; to contract all kinds of bad habits, to gratify all their whims and fancies, though infinitely pernicious both to themselves and the public; provided only they do not invade property, nor give any disturbance to others, in indulging in the same boasted but dangerous liberty.*

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* In writing with such freedom of modern governments, the author does not intend to lessen our esteem of the happy constitution of this island. As this system has been explained and confirmed by the revolution of 1688, he prefers it not only to any of the modern, but in many respects, to the best of the ancient governments. The British constitution is more wisely adapted to preserve peace, and to prevent oppression, than the Egyptian, Cretan, Lacedemonian, Athenian, Roman, or any other of the ancient monarchies or republics. None of these ancient constitutions, were so happily ballanced as the British. Either the monarch, or the nobles, or the people, had too much or too little power. The British constitution secures the lives, liberties and properties of the subjects better than any of the ancient, and is better calculated to prevent both anarchy and tyranny. But it has not taken so many precautions

Under the Utopian government, such destructive liberty is not allowed, but licentiousness is curbed with the strictest care. However, real liberty, or the liberty of indulging ourselves freely in every thing agreeable to nature and reason, no where flourishes with such security. Where such an equality is preserved, scarce can we suppose liberty to be in danger. Nor can the highest love of liberty ever be supposed dangerous, under such an equitable constitution.

4. Neither will it be difficult to shew that our Utopian government may be firm

cautions as some of the ancient governments for educating the youth, and for regulating the manners of the people. It gives too much licence to the extravagancies of humour and fancy. That very liberty which it so anxiously preserves for every individual, is no small disadvantage in several respects to the temperament and virtue of the people.

It will be thought difficult, it is truly so, to fall upon such regulations as will prevent licentiousness, without encroaching on liberty. In many cases, perhaps, this is impossible, and mankind cannot have enough of liberty and nothing more. But be this as it will, there cannot be the least doubt, but the licentiousness of modern manners might be curbed in various instances, without the most distant hazard of violating sacred liberty.

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and permanent, notwithstanding those quarrels which arise from men's affections, chancing to fix upon objects which a few or one only can enjoy. Such quarrels must certainly happen among other accidents. In love no rival can be endured. Hence, those fatal quarrels to which death alone puts an end. Nor is it possible, in many other cases, to prevent all rivalship in human society. But other rivalships can scarce be supposed to bring about great revolutions, if the danger from rivalships in ambition can be prevented. Inferior rivalships will have an influence on the fate of particular persons; but as few are interested in them, they will have little influence on the public; and a state secure against rivalships of an higher nature, will be safe from convulsions on account of less interesting quarrels.

Upon the whole, if such a constitution is once firmly established, it will suffer as little from the reigning passions of mankind as any other government, and may be fully as durable. 'Tis too bold to assert, that any human constitution can
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be exempted from all possibility of change. The best constitutions may deviate from their original principles, and gradually lose their primitive vigour; corruption is too natural to mankind, and to all their schemes in this present state, to be infallibly excluded. If our first parents fell from their pure original, who can be secure of their posterity? No government can render mankind absolutely perfect. If any one could, such a one as that of Sir Thomas More's Utopia has the fairest claim. Such a government, so far from being inconsistent with the human frame, or incapable of duration, is better ballanced and contains fewer seeds of corruption than any other. If it were once firmly established, it may justly be presumed, that it would produce such eminent examples, and would render mankind so wise, so good, and so happy, as would excite a wonderful love of its forms and institutions.

There are two things especially which disturb government, from both of which such a commonwealth would be better secured than any other.

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I. The great inequality among mankind, and the advantages enjoyed by a few, which they neither deserve, nor employ for good purposes.

II. The want of a proper education and discipline of the youth.

1. In all our constitutions, there are many offices which are both honourable and lucrative. Such offices are not always conferred on persons of capacity, and probity, who make a proper use of their authority and superior advantages for the public good. They are often bestowed wantonly on men of little merit, or little capacity; while the most useful and laborious part of mankind, are treated with contempt, are suffered to live and die in poverty, and have poverty entailed upon their posterity. How often do the most worthless enjoy great honours and estates from their ancestors, or by the foolish and indiscreet favour of princes, by the influence of friends, and by the wicked arts of party and cabal? Seldom can one absolutely expect promotion

tion on account of his capacity or merit; after his most strenuous efforts, a faction frequently throws him at a distance, and a worthless rival is preferred. Tyranny is mingled with all our governments: it is either interwoven in the very frame of the constitution, or arises from errors in the administration, or from the superior influence of the great. By means of this tyranny, the lowest and weakest of the people are often oppressed; while those of higher rank, and of greater spirit and capacity are provoked. Hence such frequent murmurs, such dangerous convulsions, such fatal revolutions. What else can be expected? Can it be expected that men of sense and spirit, should not be provoked by observing weak, insolent, and profligate men enjoying those advantages to which they justly conceive they have a better title? How natural is the attempt to make this title good, by improving the opportunities which arise from the blunders and tyranny of their rivals in power? Hence our governments are changeable and unsteady. Hence many factions and cabals for power and domi-

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nion in the very best of governments, and under the very best of administrations.

For it must be observed, that these vices and defects of which mankind have been complaining in all ages, are not to be imputed to any one particular kind of government, or administration, exclusive of all others, but are to be found in a less or greater degree in all governments, and under all administrations, the Utopian excepted; they arise from the intrinsic nature of the governments themselves, in which there must happen thousands of accidents, errors, and hardships, which cannot possibly be prevented by the governors, though there may be many among them of the highest abilities, as well as of the most upright intentions and greatest integrity.

But under such a government as we have described, the equitable distribution of labour, and of the profits of it, would take away the occasion of hardships and dangerous cabals. As by removing property, we destroy theft and robbery; so by maintaining an equality, we prevent hard-

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hardships, banish discord, and restore the golden age. Under such a constitution, men would live in peace and friendship, they would mutually assist one another, by their united labours they would cultivate the earth, and advance continually in knowledge; nor would there be any place for an enormous ambition, which wastes kingdoms, and causes such havock and desolation in the earth. Could we suppose that the members of such a commonwealth had by any means got an idea of our imperfect constitutions, and of that vast abyss of vice and wretchedness into which we are plunged; could they compare our vices and distresses with the innocence and happiness which they enjoyed under their more perfect model; with what care and anxiety would they preserve such a blessed constitution? With what vigilance would they watch against the first appearances of a dangerous pride and ambition? But how could pride and ambition grow up to a dangerous height, with such an education as would be natural in such a government, or with such examples as would be the

natural consequence of such an education? It is the want of a proper discipline and education of the youth, which is the second great source of our vices and wretchedness, and which renders our governments so changeable and unsteady.

2. Mankind being vicious and corrupted, have not an idea of that high virtue of which their nature is capable. Depraved themselves, they are negligent in educating their children. Good men are often indolent, or too much employed otherwise. Many are ignorant, and have not a sufficient capacity; or they are poor, and have not the means for giving their children a proper education. Even when the parents are careful and able, their endeavours are often disappointed by the poisonous examples of other children who are ill educated. In short, the world being once corrupted, this corruption cannot be rooted out. Ignorance and wicked maxims prevail, and a wrong taste is propagated from age to age.

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Corruption, is indeed natural to mankind. Frowardness, and a lust of power, appear early in children. The seeds of pride and tyranny seem to be deeply rooted in their constitution. Yet, were they not cherished by the wretched taste of parents and nurses, were they properly curbed by an early discipline, they would seldom grow up to monstrous heights. With proper management, good dispositions might be so effectually instilled into youth, as would prevent such a deluge of vice as has overwhelmed the world. Some particular dispositions might perhaps be incurable. Yet there would be few of so perverse a nature, and these few would meet with so many discouragements and checks, as would prevent any dangerous alterations in the state. Thus this happy government would be the firmest of any; and nothing would give reason to apprehend a change, but the uncertainty of all human affairs, and the continual vicissitudes to which mankind are exposed in this imperfect state.

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How happy would be the consequences of such an excellent government! Every discouragement to marriage would be effectually removed. Wise regulations would be established to gratify the natural passion of love, in an easy and agreeable manner. No false maxims which corrupt the taste in this grand concern would be in vogue; nor any temptation from interest to mislead the choice. Poverty being effectually banished, and every one upon an equal footing, the numerous impediments arising from an inequality of rank, estates, or other circumstances, would be wholly removed. In this situation, according to the original blessing and command, mankind would be fruitful, and multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it. By the help of such vast numbers living without anxiety, and in a goodly correspondence, they would be able to cultivate every spot that was habitable in the manner most suitable to its nature. By their united labours, they would raise the most magnificent works, and add innumerable beauties to the face of the earth. Know-

can be established.

105

ledge would increase wonderfully by experiments made at leisure, and with exactness, in all places of the earth; which would be freely communicated every where, and be regularly transmitted to posterity. An unconceivable progress would be made in discovering the laws of nature. There would be proportionable advances in all sorts of useful, ingenious, and agreeable arts. Every one might have the means of being a philosopher if he pleased. A happy emulation, or love of glory; an unsatiable curiosity; the love of truth, and an ardent thirst after knowledge, would render men more ingenious, and more successful in making useful discoveries, than either their present wants and necessities, or their love of gain. Scarce can any thing be supposed so difficult to be discovered or effected, that it would not yield to the united efforts of mankind in such a favourable situation: In short, the whole earth would become a paradise, and mankind be universally wise and happy.

P R O S.

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PROSPECT IV.

The preceding Model of Government, tho' consistent with the Human Passions and Appetites, is upon the whole inconsistent with the Circumstances of Mankind upon the Earth.



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PROSPECT IV.

The preceding History of Govern-
ment, though with the
Human Race, is upon the
with the Circumstances of Man-
kind upon the Earth.



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PROSPECT IV.

BY this time, I dare say my reader has pronounced me to be an enthusiastic admirer of the Utopian schemes, and an enemy to all inequality of rank, wealth and fortune among men: nor is the charge, perhaps, altogether without foundation. The establishment of property in lands, has been attended with many disadvantages; it seems indeed to have been one great source, not only of those calamities, but of those vices, which have been so sensibly felt, and so loudly complained of in every age. At the same time, so far is it from appearing to have been necessary at the first constitution of society, that it seems rather to have been owing to accidents that it was first thought of, or that mankind consented to make such an experiment. Being ignorant and destitute of experience in what is called the state of nature,

110 A PERFECT GOVERNMENT inconsistent nature, feeling the evils of their defenceless and indigent condition; having abundance of room in these early days, and not foreseeing the evils to which the establishment of property would give occasion, they unfortunately had their first recourse to this expedient, instead of agreeing to an equitable distribution of labour, and to a community of goods. But if we consider their circumstances at that time, before any particular spots of the earth had been appropriated by individuals, the establishment of property does not appear to be the most natural and obvious scheme of promoting peace and union. Instead of dividing the lands among particular persons, might they not have consented to labour them in common, and share equally of the fruits? They would have found this rather more easy; and if they had fallen into this tract at the beginning, and made some essays of this kind, though rude and imperfect, they might have been taught by experience to correct their errors, and possibly might at last have set their affairs upon

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 111
a better footing than ever they have been
hitherto.

When I consider things in this light, though I cannot but wonder that the ingenious author of a late "Discourse" hath preferred a savage and solitary state of mankind, to the best civilized societies that ever were erected; yet it is not surprising that he is not fully reconciled to the establishment of property, and is of opinion, that this establishment has given occasion to innumerable vices and distresses which would never have been heard of, had society been formed according to another model *.

How-

* The author of the discourse "sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inegalité parmi les hommes" is a most ingenious writer; yet with all his eloquence he will never persuade mankind, that such a savage state as he describes, is the state which nature intended for men. Neither is it suitable for one capable of such deep contemplation, and endued with such a beautiful genius as Mr. Rousseau, to appear so zealous in defence of savage manners. What a shocking and frightful image does he set before us, of mankind "wandering about in the woods, naked, or cloathed with the skins of beasts; stupid, staring, without knowledge, or the least desire after it, without observation, without
" out

However, it is not safe to be dogmatic in speculations of this nature, where we can only conjecture, and where experience might soon convince us of our mistakes. In subjects where plausible arguments may be brought on both sides, 'tis safest both for our own character, and for the sake of truth, to incline to the academic philosophy, and to indulge in a moderate scepticism. Even in things that are common, 'tis difficult to avoid all mistakes; in uncommon subjects, 'tis but merely possible. In political questions it is easy to fall into errors, and to fancy things to be possible or advantageous, which after a

“out reflection, without language, without society,
 “filling their bellies grossly when hungry, and then
 “lying down to sleep; living on the spontaneous fruits
 “of the earth, without exercising their fine genius in
 “agriculture, or in any arts which could either tend to
 “the support or ornament of their nature: propagating
 “their kind in casual rencounters, without marriage,
 “or any farther acquaintance with the mother or with
 “the offspring.” How dreadful a picture! Yet according to this Philosopher, this is the state which a wise Providence intended originally for men. As long as they continued in this stupid and savage state, they were independent, free, and happy: but the first attempt to reason was a manifest sign of depravity, and a departure from their happy original.

trial,

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 113
trial, would be found either impracticable or hurtful. Ancient and modern law-givers may perhaps have been better and wiser, and the materials on which alone they could work, worse than is sometimes apprehended. Perhaps, human affairs could not have been conducted according to a different system, or mankind made much wiser or happier than they have already been at certain periods of time.

But without entering further into these abstracted and uncertain speculations, it deserves our particular attention, That as no government which hath hitherto been established, is free from all seeds of corruption, or can be expected to be eternal; so if we suppose a government to be perfect in its original frame, and to be administered in the most perfect manner, after whatever model we suppose it to have been framed, such a perfect form would be so far from lasting for ever, that it must come to an end so much the sooner on account of its perfection.

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For,

114 A PERFECT GOVERNMENT inconsistent

For, though happily such governments should be firmly established, though they should be found consistent with the reigning passions of human nature, though they should spread far and wide; nay, though they should prevail universally, they must at last involve mankind in the deepest perplexity, and in universal confusion. For how excellent soever they may be in their own nature, they are altogether inconsistent with the present frame of nature, and with a limited extent of earth.

Under a perfect government, the inconveniencies of having a family would be so intirely removed, children would be so well taken care of, and every thing become so favourable to populousness, that though some sickly seasons or dreadful plagues in particular climates might cut off multitudes, yet in general, mankind would encrease so prodigiously, that the earth would at last be overstocked, and become unable to support its numerous inhabitants.

How

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 115

How long the earth, with the best culture of which it is capable from human genius and industry, might be able to nourish its perpetually increasing inhabitants, is as impossible as it is unnecessary to be determined. It is not probable that it could have supported them during so long a period as since the creation of Adam. But whatever may be supposed of the length of this period, of necessity it must be granted, that the earth could not nourish them for ever, unless either its fertility could be continually augmented, or by some secret in nature, like what certain enthusiasts have expected from the philosophers stone, some wise adept in the occult sciences, should invent a method of supporting mankind quite different from any thing known at present. Nay, though some extraordinary method of supporting them might possibly be found out, yet if there was no bound to the increase of mankind, which would be the case under a perfect government, there would not even be sufficient room for containing their bodies upon the surface of the earth, or upon any limited

116 A PERFECT GOVERNMENT inconsistent surface whatsoever. It would be necessary, therefore, in order to find room for such multitudes of men, that the earth should be continually enlarging in bulk, as an animal or vegetable body.

Now since philosophers may as soon attempt to make mankind immortal, as to support the animal frame without food; it is equally certain, that limits are set to the fertility of the earth, and that its bulk, so far as is hitherto known, hath continued always the same, and probably could not be much altered without making considerable changes in the solar system. It would be impossible, therefore, to support the great numbers of men who would be raised up under a perfect government; the earth would be overstocked at last, and the greatest admirers of such fanciful schemes must foresee the fatal period when they would come to an end, as they are altogether inconsistent with the limits of that earth in which they must exist.

What a miserable catastrophe of the most generous of all human systems of
go-

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 117
government ! How dreadfully would the magistrates of such commonwealths find themselves disconcerted at that fatal period, when there was no longer any room for new colonies, and when the earth could produce no further supplies ! During all the preceding ages, while there was room for increase, mankind must have been happy ; the earth must have been a paradise in the literal sense, as the greatest part of it must have been turned into delightful and fruitful gardens. But when the dreadful time should at last come, when our globe, by the most diligent culture, could not produce what was sufficient to nourish its numerous inhabitants, what happy expedient could then be found out to remedy so great an evil ?

(In such a cruel necessity, must there be a law to restrain marriage ? Must multitudes of women, be shut up in cloisters like the ancient vestals or modern nuns ? To keep a ballance between the two sexes, must a proportionable number of men be debarred from marriage ? Shall the Utopians, following the wicked policy



118 A PERFECT GOVERNMENT inconsistent of superstition, forbid their priests to marry; or shall they rather sacrifice men of some other profession for the good of the state? Or, shall they appoint the sons of certain families to be maimed at their birth, and give a sanction to the unnatural institution of eunuchs? If none of these expedients can be thought proper, shall they appoint a certain number of infants to be exposed to death as soon as they are born, determining the proportion according to the exigencies of the state; and pointing out the particular victims by lot, or according to some established rule? Or, must they shorten the period of human life by a law, and condemn all to die after they had compleated a certain age, which might be shorter or longer, as provisions were either more scanty or plentiful? Or what other method should they devise (for an expedient would be absolutely necessary) to restrain the number of citizens within reasonable bounds?

Alas! how unnatural and inhuman must every such expedient be accounted!

The

The natural passions and appetites of mankind are planted in our frame, to answer the best ends for the happiness both of the individuals and of the species. Shall we be obliged to contradict such a wise order? Shall we be laid under the necessity of acting barbarously and inhumanly? Sad and fatal necessity! And which, after all, could never answer the end, but would give rise to violence and war. For mankind would never agree about such regulations. Force, and arms, must at last decide their quarrels, and the deaths of such as fall in battle, leave sufficient provisions for the survivors, and make room for others to be born.

Thus the tranquility and numerous blessings of the Utopian governments would come to an end; war, or cruel and unnatural customs, be introduced, and a stop put to the increase of mankind, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the culture of the earth, in spite of the most excellent laws and wisest precautions. The more excellent the laws had been, and the more strictly they had

been observed, mankind must have sooner become miserable. The remembrance of former times, the greatness of their wisdom and virtue, would conspire to heighten their distress; and the world, instead of remaining the mansion of wisdom and happiness, become the scene of vice and confusion. Force and fraud must prevail, and mankind be reduced to the same calamitous condition as at present.

Such a melancholy situation in consequence merely of the want of provisions, is in truth more unnatural than all their present calamities. Supposing men to have abused their liberty, by which abuse, vice has once been introduced into the world; and that wrong notions, a bad taste, and vicious habits, have been strengthened by the defects of education and government, our present distresses may be easily explained. They may even be called natural, being the natural consequences of our depravity. They may be supposed to be the means by which providence punishes vice; and by setting bounds to the encrease of mankind, prevents the
 earth's

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 121

earth's being overstocked, and men being laid under the cruel necessity of killing one another. But to suppose that in the course of a favourable providence, a perfect government had been established, under which the disorders of human passions had been powerfully corrected and restrained; poverty, idleness, and war, banished; the earth made a paradise; universal friendship and concord established, and human society rendered flourishing in all respects; and that such a lovely constitution should be overturned, not by the vices of men, or their abuse of liberty, but by the order of nature itself, seems wholly unnatural, and altogether disagreeable to the methods of providence.

By reasoning in this manner, it is not pretended that 'tis unnatural to set bounds to human knowledge and happiness, or to the grandeur of society, and to confine what is finite to proper limits. It is certainly fit to set just bounds to every thing according to its nature, and to adjust all things in due proportion to one another.

Un-

Undoubtedly, such an excellent order is actually established throughout all the works of God in his wide dominions. But there are certain primary determinations in nature, to which all other things of a subordinate kind must be adjusted. A limited earth, a limited degree of fertility, and the continual increase of mankind are three of these original constitutions. To these determinations, human affairs, and the circumstances of all other animals, must be adapted. In which view, it is unsuitable to our ideas of order, that while the earth is only capable of maintaining a determined number, the human race should encrease without end. This would be the necessary consequence of a perfect government and education. On which account it is more contrary to just proportion, to suppose that such a perfect government should be established in such circumstances, than that by permitting vice, or the abuse of liberty in the wisdom of providence, mankind should never be able to multiply so greatly as to overstock the earth.

From this view of the circumstances of the world, notwithstanding the high opinion we have of the merit of Sir Thomas More, and other admired projectors of perfect governments in ancient or modern times, we may discern how little can be expected from their most perfect systems.

As for these worthy philosophers, patriots, and law-givers, who have employed their time and their talents in framing such excellent models, we ought to do justice to their characters, and gratefully to acknowledge their generous efforts to rescue the world out of that distress into which it has fallen, through the imperfection of government. Sincere, and ardent in their love of virtue, enamoured of its lovely form, deeply interested for the happiness of mankind to the best of their skill, and with hearts full of zeal, they have strenuously endeavoured to advance human society to perfection. For this, their memory ought to be sacred to posterity. But if they expected their beautiful systems actually to take place,
their

124 A PERFECT GOVERNMENT inconsistent
their hopes were ill founded, and they
were not sufficiently aware of the conse-
quences.

The speculations of such ingenious au-
thors enlarge our views, and amuse our
fancies. They are useful for directing us
to correct certain errors at particular times.
Able legislators ought to consider them
as models, and honest patriots ought
never to lose sight of them, or any
proper opportunity of transplanting the
wisest of their maxims into their own go-
vernments, as far as they are adapted to
their particular circumstances, and will
give no occasion to dangerous convulsions.
But this is all that can be expected.
Though such ingenious romances should
chance to be read and admired, jealous
and selfish politicians need not be alarmed.
Such statesmen need not fear that ever
such airy systems shall be able to destroy
their craft, or disappoint them of their in-
tention to sacrifice the interest of mankind
to their own avarice or ambition. There
is too powerful a charm which works se-
cretly in favour of such politicians, which
I will

with the Circumstances of Mankind. 125
will for ever defeat all attempts to establish a perfect government. There is no need of miracles for this purpose. The vices of mankind are sufficient. And we need not doubt but providence will make use of them, for preventing the establishment of governments which are by no means suitable to the present circumstances of the earth.

P R O S P E C T V.

A View of the Beauty, Wisdom,
and Magnificence of Nature.

P R O S-

The vices of mankind are infinite. And we need not doubt our Providence will make use of them for preventing the establishment of governments which are by no means suitable to the present circumstances of the earth.

rights

PROSPECT V.



PROSPECT V.

A View of the Beauty, Wisdom,
and Magnificence of Nature.



P R O S P E C T . V .

A View of the
and Magnificence of Nature.



P R O S P E C T V.

" **O** Lord, how manifold are thy works!
 " In wisdom thou hast made them
 " all. The earth is full of thy riches.
 " So is this great and wide sea, wherein
 " there are things innumerable*. God
 " doth great things, past finding out:
 " yea, and wonders without number †.
 " Great is our Lord, and of great power;
 " his understanding is infinite ‡. He hath
 " measured the waters in the hollow of
 " his hand. He hath meted out Heaven
 " with the span, he comprehends the dust
 " of the earth in a measure; he weighs
 " the mountains in scales, and the hills in
 " a balance §. He causeth the vapours to
 " ascend from the ends of the earth: he
 " bringeth the wind out of his treasures ††.

* Psalm civ. 24, 25. † Job ix. 10. ‡ Psalm
 cxlvii. 4, 5. § Isaiah xl. 12. †† Psalm cxxxv. 7.

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“ He covereth the Heavens with clouds: he
“ prepareth rain for the earth: he maketh
“ grass to grow upon the mountains*.
“ The pastures are cloathed with flocks:
“ The valleys are also covered with corn†.
“ The Lord is good unto all: he openeth
“ his hand, and satisfies the desire of eve-
“ ry living thing ||.”

In these and other lofty expressions, the sacred writers describe the beauty, grandeur, variety, and wisdom of the works of God. The descriptions are suited to the majesty of the objects, and in language full of energy, convey the most sublime conceptions of the magnificence of nature.

How grand is that prospect which is set before us during the solemn silence and shade of night! The luminaries of Heaven shine forth with majestick pomp, and form a glorious spectacle to the eye. To the contemplative mind, they appear

* Psalm cxlvii. 8. † Psalm lxy. 13. || Psalm cxlv. 9. 16.

MAGNIFICENCE OF NATURE. 131

still more wonderful, and afford a delightful subject of speculation. Reason comes in aid to the feebleness of sense, and directs the imagination, which, guided by this superior faculty, conceives the planets to be large spheres of similar substances with that of our earth, and to be fitted for the same purposes. It conceives the smaller globes which attend these planets to be similar to the moon; and each of the other stars with which the Heavens are bespangled, to communicate, like the sun, light and heat to depending satellites, which, by reason of their distance, are invisible to mankind. How numerous are these globes! How regular their courses! How many noble, though unknown purposes may they answer in their respective regions! How large is the circumference of their orbits, and how immense are their distances from this earth! Yet, these immense distances do not render them useless to mankind. By their various positions and courses, they distinguish different quarters and regions, both in heaven and earth. They mark out the revolutions of days, months, and years.

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Hence the certain succession of night and day, and the beautiful variety of returning seasons. These prodigious globes are sunk in unfathomable spaces, and are placed at immense distances, not only from us, but from one another. To comprehend this vast extent, the imagination stretches itself in vain. Reason, though more comprehensive, cannot, in infinity itself, find numbers able to exhaust so great a magnitude. In respect of this boundless space, the greatest distance on this our globe vanishes. The earth itself is scarce perceptible amidst such mighty spheres, and shrinks into a point when compared with these more magnificent works of God.

But even upon this our earth, though of an inferior size, many stupendous objects strike the imagination. Lofty mountains, continued ranges of hills, vast wilds and deserts, wide and extended plains, large and rapid streams present themselves to our view, and create an agreeable astonishment. The rivers run down in their hollow channels from age to

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to age. Swelled with the rains from Heaven, they break down their banks with an impetuous force, and overflow the neighbouring plains. Yet collecting greater plenty of waters continually as they lengthen their courses, at last they pour out copious and never-failing floods into the sea.

With still greater agitation do we behold the vast collection of waters in the ocean, which at once satisfies the eye with the boundless prospect, and presents the wonders of the deep to the contemplative mind. Hark! the impetuous winds are raised; the unruly element dashes its furious waves against impending rocks. By its roaring billows amidst the boisterous tempests, it sets before us an idea of a power irresistible, and fills our minds with awe. But now the winds are hushed; and the violent agitation of the waters ceasing, the storm is changed into a calm, and the smooth and wide surface presents us with the fair image of reigning order and universal peace.

134 The BEAUTY, WISDOM, and

Nor is it greatness alone that strikes us in the prospect of nature. Joined to this magnificence, we observe an exact uniformity, and an endless variety. Hence that enchanting beauty which yields so much pleasure; whether we behold the vast machine at one view, or at greater leisure survey its different parts,

How delightful is the prospect of the earth, diversified with hills, valleys, woods, rivers, lakes and seas! The verdure and freshness of the spring, the rich fruits of autumn, and that plenty of variegated flowers which gaily blossom in summer, greatly heighten our pleasure. How chearful is the rising sun, which discloses their various beauties! How enlivening are his morning beams! How bright, and how vigorous is his mid-day light and heat! How gentle, and how composing are his evening rays! How awful and how solemn is the silence of the night, which draws a veil over the face of nature, and by throwing a shade upon the glories of this earth, prepares for rest and sleep. Yet, never is the earth wholly deprived of light;
for

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for now the moon and stars assume their wonted empire, and send forth their chearful, though fainter rays to prevent a total darkness.

Not only the fertile fields and meadows which are watered with brooks and rills; not only the woods and richer plains with the grassy pastures of the mountains, and all the more finished scenes, give pleasure to the eye, and strike us with a sense of beauty; but even the rougher and less finished parts of nature. With a pleasing astonishment we behold the barren heath, the wildness of the desert, the unshapen rocks, and impending precipices. The rigours of winter have their peculiar graces, and furnish us with prospects which become agreeable in their season.

Nature hath made ample provision not for our pleasure only, but for the conveniencies and necessities of mankind, and the other animals which are inhabitants of our globe.

How many different sorts of soils and moulds are to be found upon the surface of the earth! Some are prolific, and produce innumerable seeds and roots, which either serve to furnish tasteful food to man and other animals; or to prepare delicious and refreshing liquors for quenching their thirst, and for exhilarating their spirits; or, are of great use in the composition of powerful medicines. Other kinds of earths are unfit for vegetation: yet none of them are really barren and unprofitable, but add fertility to other moulds, and are useful in the numerous arts which minister to the necessities and conveniences of human life.

Besides earthy substances, nature has provided plenty of bodies which have a more firm consistence. It furnishes stones for houses, and other structures. These stones are harder or softer, to answer different ends. Being compacted together by a glutinous earth, they are erected into edifices, which endure for ages, and withstand the force of the fiercest storms.

There

MAGNIFICENCE of NATURE. 137

There are other stones, some brighter, some paler, of one or diverse colours, which by their peculiar lustre, serve for elegance and ornament; but being less necessary, are of a smaller size, and are found more rarely than others which serve for more substantial uses.

Within the dark and cold recesses of the earth, yet not far below its surface, that mankind may dig for them more easily, nature hath provided large quantities of combustible substances for supplying us with light and heat. Various metals are also generated, which being pure and unmixed, or mixed and compounded by human art, are formed into innumerable instruments and utensils, which are both curious and useful.

Besides these grosser substances, what plenty is there of the liquid element widely dispersed throughout the earth. Waters rise up in sweet springs and fountains, or in minerals of a more poignant taste, according to the different kinds of earth, stones, or metals with which they are

138 The BEAUTY, WISDOM, and
impregnated in their subterraneous passages.
Sometimes collected into larger quantities,
they flow down gently in purling rills.
Sometimes they roll along with impetuous
currents to the seas, from whose surface
being continually raised in vapours by the
influence of the sun, they float in the at-
mosphere, and are rarified or condensed
according to its temperature. Being rari-
fied, they mount up into the higher re-
gions, till becoming of the same gra-
vity with the circumambient air, they
are suspended for a time; or if con-
densed, fall down in dews, rains, snows,
hails, and frosts, and with their enrich-
ing moisture convey prolifick feeds to all
parts of the earth.

By the constant vicissitude of the tides,
when the waters rise or fall, according to
the motions of the moon, all stagnation
of the ocean is prevented, and the foulness
and corruption of its waters are purged.

To preserve the element of air pure
and healthful, gentle gales and bree-
zes,

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zes, nay, the fiercest winds, become the obedient ministers of the Almighty.

Innumerable grains, roots, herbs, flowers, shrubs and trees, divided into many different kinds, belong to the vegetable kingdom. The distinction of the different kinds is visible in the constant similitude of the figure, and in the uniform formation of the parts, which by their union and mutual dependance show that they constitute one common system, and belong to the same nature. How beautiful are their various forms and colours! How refreshing and enlivening are their perfumes! How powerful are their influences and virtues! How regular are the processes from the smallest seed or plant, to the most sweetly perfumed, or the most finely variegated flower; or to the most fruitful or firmest tree! The most regular figures drawn by the scale and compass, the most complicated machines, and the most magnificent works of art, are far less to be admired than the various tribes of vegetables, which by a mysterious progress, from weak and
con-

140 The BEAUTY, WISDOM, and M
contemptible beginnings, arrive at last
at such beauty, firmness, and grandeur.
We may fully understand all the secrets of
human art, and trace its deepest wisdom:
the secrets of nature in the vegetable œco-
nomy are impenetrable, and its wisdom
never to be fully comprehended.

But whatever wonders may be observed
in the formation and growth of the vege-
table kinds, the structure of animals is
still more wonderful and divine. Indued
with various degrees of perception, by
which they are sensible of their existence,
their life is infinitely superior to that of
vegetables. Unanimated matter exists not
for itself. To those alone who are capable
of perceiving it, its existence is of impor-
tance. But animals live, feel and enjoy.
By the production of insensible matter, the
Creator displays his grandeur and wisdom:
but it is by means of living substances a-
lone, which are endued with sense and per-
ception, that the exuberant goodness of
the great Father of the universe can be
manifested.

What

MAGNIFICENCE of NATURE. 141

What immense multitudes of animals are continually raised up to taste the sweets of life, and to participate of the divine bounty. Not only the individuals of the various tribes, but the tribes themselves are innumerable. Each species arises as in a scale from the smallest insect to Behemoth, the chief of the ways of God*. Each species is found with peculiar degrees of perfection. The distinction of kinds is regularly preserved in the external shape, in the internal constitution, and in their different methods of living. Wherever we can carry our searches, we find a never failing abundance of animal life. What multitudes of animals tread upon the earth, or lodge in its bosom, or creep along its surface! How many fly a little above the surface, or mount aloft into the open firmament of heaven! What multitudes dwell or swim in the waters! That no place may be empty, their bulk is gradually diminished, till they become insensible to the naked eye, and can be descried by glasses alone. We cannot trace

* Job xl. 19.

them

142 The BEAUTY, WISDOM, and
them farther, but see clearly that nature
every where is stored with life and feeling;
nor is it possible for us to assign the limits
of this prolific virtue.

How just are the proportions of animated bodies! How beautiful are their forms! How curious is the texture of those substances of which they are compounded! How proper is the structure and situation of their parts! What high regard is shewn to ornament and grace! What abundant provision is made for conveniency and use! Every thing in the animal œconomy appears to be adjusted with the deepest skill, yet, which encreases the wonder, every thing proceeds from causes, which, in appearance, are unequal to the effects. What is there in generation, the only visible and sensible origin of animal bodies, or in nutrition, the cause of the enlargement and growth of all their parts, that seems capable of so regular an energy, as is visible in the formation and growth of animals.

What

What plentiful sources of pleasure are the senses of animals! With what excellent instincts are they endued by the wise and bountiful Creator! Incapable of speech, untaught by any but nature herself, they find out the use of their faculties, and attain the full perfection of their kind. In searching out their food, in propagating and providing for their young, in choosing or in preparing their habitations, they act with a sagacious foresight, and discover a wonderful capacity. In rest and exercise, in ease and labour, in their amusements, maxims and arts of life, unlike to fickle and unconstant men, they steadily pursue the same fixed rules without the least deviation. Destitute of the guidance of reason, and escaping its weaknesses, they are directed by what appears superior, and become perfectly skilled in arts, in which our higher faculties are not able to instruct us.

How far inferior, notwithstanding, are all the other animals to man, and how divine is that reason with which he is endued! How many and how different objects

objects does the mind of man comprehend at once, or in the quickest succession! Starting from the narrow bounds of the body, in a moment it reaches to all the surrounding objects. It runs over plains, mountains, rivers, villages, cities, and whatever else lies within sight. Not satisfied with such narrow limits, but disdain- ing all confinement, it imagines the most distant scenes, and apprehends objects be- yond objects without end. Equally uncon- fined with respect to time, from the pre- sent instant it looks back on innumera- ble ages already past, and extends its thoughts to an eternity to come. An in- finite number of objects, far and near, great and small, of all diversities of colours and figures, are painted in its imagina- tion. The transactions of all nations in all the regions of this earth, during all past ages, may be treasured up in its memory.

But it is not by the power of sensation, nor by the strength of imagination or me- mory, that men chiefly discover their su- periority to the other animals, and prove the extent of their genius and understand- ing.

ing. Their pre-eminence consists chiefly in the power of reasoning, reflecting, and comparing. By these faculties, they discern the various relations, that the various objects with which they are surrounded, bear to one another; the various uses for which these objects serve; the most excellent ends which rational creatures ought to propose, and the manner in which they may best promote these ends. Hence, the capacity of discerning the beauty of the works of nature and art, of which other animals seem wholly destitute. Hence that capacity of science, that taste of arts, that love of order, that regard for virtue, that disapprobation of vice, that contempt of baseness, those ideas of superior invisible beings; especially the idea of the infinitely perfect author of nature, all which are natural to mankind.

Have not the most profound theorems been discovered, the most difficult and perplexed problems been investigated, the most useful instruments been invented, the most complicated machines been contrived, the most convenient utensils been pro-

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vided

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vided by the force of human genius and
sagacity? Even the more common and
mechanical, as well as the more liberal
arts, discover a mighty genius, and won-
derfully illustrate the capacity of man-
kind.

Led to these arts, perhaps by chance,
having accidentally made some rude es-
says, and having finished the first imper-
fect draught of them with difficulty; by
a long series of observations they have
brought them at last to such perfection,
that the difficulty of the invention is for-
gotten, and they are now become fami-
liar in the world.

Over all these arts and sciences, philo-
sophy presides, as of the highest dignity.
She judges of their different merits
and pretensions. She assigns to each of
them their respective provinces, and pre-
serves her own superiority. Various are
mens dispositions and abilities, and by
their different characters, they discover
different degrees of perfection. But it is
by the study and practice of true philoso-
phy,

phy, that the highest dignity of human nature is displayed. Among all the characters of mankind, that of the philosopher himself is the most perfect. Distinguished from those of an inferior kind, by clearer and more distinct perceptions; by more comprehensive views both of nature and art; by a more ardent love and higher admiration of what is excellent; by a firmer attachment to virtue, and the general good of the world; by a lower regard for all inferior beauties compared with the supreme, consisting in rectitude of conduct and dignity of behaviour; by a greater moderation in prosperity, and greater patience and courage under the evils of life; the real philosopher, though not absolutely perfect, sets the grandeur of human genius in the fairest light.

But not only in this exalted character; in those also of an inferior order, the excellence of human reason and genius renders itself conspicuous.

By statuary, we bring distant objects to sight, and recall past scenes. We form

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images of men and other animals, which
appear to breathe, feel, and live.

With greater art, the painter represents
all kinds of solid bodies upon a plane.
Though no image can be felt upon the
smooth surface, we behold with admira-
tion, heights and hollows, mountains and
valleys, men and cattle, which bear a per-
fect resemblance to what they are in na-
ture.

After another manner, the poet dis-
plays his art, and sets all sorts of objects
before us without any sensible image. By
apt and natural descriptions, he presents
them to the imagination. Not only sen-
sible objects, but the inward motions and
affections of the soul, pass before us in
review. By drawing feigned, as well as
real characters, he displays the native
graces of virtue and wisdom, and ex-
poses the deformity of vice and folly. By
the sentiments and examples of the per-
sonages whom he introduces, he power-
fully touches our hearts, and instills the
soundest instruction at pleasure.

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The tragic poet assumes a sovereign command over our strongest passions. To enable us to govern and refine them, and to prepare us to meet with great and sudden calamities in life, he exercises us by representations of imaginary evils. By views of the distresses of virtue, he cherishes our love of it; melts us into the deepest compassion, and awakens our highest concern for the afflictions of the great and good. But in a moment he repays this generous concern, by raising an inexpressible joy, while he unravels the plot, and makes us spectators of the final and compleat happiness of the virtuous.

With an equal or greater force of genius, the Epic poet, by the sublimity of his conceptions, and the harmony of his numbers, equals the virtues and dignity of heroes, and approaches to the magnificence and majesty of nature.

The orator, not only unravels the darkest and deepest plots, and sets the most intricate subjects in the clearest light, but subdues every unmanly passion, rouses up

150 The BEAUTY, WISDOM, and
whatever is generous in the human breast,
extinguishes all mean and unworthy re-
gards, inspires courage and a contempt of
danger, and animates his audience with
the love of glory, and with a concern for
the public good.

By music, we so strike and agitate the
invisible substance of air, and direct its
imperceptible motions with so divine an
art, as raises an enchanting harmony, which
composes, exalts, and ravishes the soul.

Geometry determines lines, to which
we cannot apply any measure. It traces
out lines, which though continually ap-
proaching nearer to one another, can ne-
ver coincide, however far they are ex-
tended. It has discovered the most inge-
nious, surprising, and just mensurations of
surfaces and solid bodies. It traces ac-
curately the paths of bodies which are
thrown into the air, though projected at
random in any direction whatsoever.

From projectiles near the surface of the
earth, astronomy leads our thoughts to

the planets, which are of equal magnitude, and of a similar substance to that of our earth. It considers these mighty globes as projected by an almighty hand; and confined in their different orbits, by that same gravity which causes all bodies that are projected by man to descend to the earth. By means of imaginary points, lines, and circles, it divides the heavens into its distinct regions. It assigns to the fixed stars, their settled habitations. It marks out the wide circuits of the planets and comets; and calculates their periods, oppositions, and conjunctions, with an astonishing exactness.

In the easiest manner, arithmetick adjusts the greatest sums by a cypher and the nine digits. It adds, multiplies, and divides numbers in every manner that can be required. It arranges and combines them in all sorts of regular serieses and progressions, both finite and infinite. It not only discovers with a wonderful facility, the properties and sums of finite ones, from general principles, without a tedious consideration of each particu-

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lar number; but by determining the sums
of such progressions as can never come to
an end, sets bounds to infinity itself.
With no less surprising invention, it ef-
fects impossibilities, and when no real
quantity can be found which will answer
the question that is proposed, it finds out
a just solution by imaginary, yet intelli-
gible quantities; or by a series of quantities
which continually approximates to the
truth, till at length all error vanishes.

In the monuments of architecture, we
see the monuments of human strength
and skill. By this noble art, magnificent
edifices, stupendous arches, and lofty
obelisks have been erected; which stand
firm against the attacks of the fiercest
storms, and convey to latest posterity the
memory of the most ancient ages.

By a numerous train of mechanical arts,
mankind have provided for the dignity,
for the pleasure, and for the conveniency
of life. They measure their time accu-
rately, by dials, clocks, and watches. By
pendulums, they correct and adjust the
ine-

inequalities of the sun's motion. By telescopes and microscopes, they enlarge the objects of sight; while, through the machinery of glasses, as by magic, they display the minute and concealed parts of nature; or force the most distant objects to appear in their presence, and to expose themselves to view. By the help of polished mirrors, they draw the most exact pictures in the twinkling of an eye; and not only mimic the forms, but the quickest motions of every object which is exposed before the mirrors.

By a sagacious application of the force of gravity, they abridge their labour, and multiply their forces in what proportion they see necessary. They have invented pumps, by which they make water ascend contrary to its nature. By those of another form, they compress and dilate the invisible and intangible substance of air: nay, human genius has found out the means of weighing the air, and of balancing, in some measure, the clouds of heaven.

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The more common and familiar arts, as well as those that are refined, are certain proofs of human sagacity. Scarce can we open our eyes, and take the slightest view of human society, but indisputable effects of human genius present themselves every where to our minds.

By planting, sowing, and all the various operations in agriculture and gardening; by pasturing, fishing, and hunting by, and by all the arts of preparing food, mankind at once display their genius, and provide plentifully for the necessities and comfort of human life.

How ingeniously does the profound and learned chymist extract the enlivening spirit from the grossest and most lumpish materials! He separates the different ingredients, and reduces compounded substances into their first principles. But, without this deeper chymistry, by the more useful and common arts of brewing and distilling, we extract the spirituous parts out of grains, seeds and fruits,
and

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and furnish ourselves with plenty of refreshing and strengthening liquors.

How curious are the processes from the first principles of cloth, till it is wrought up into its utmost perfection, and is turned into so dissimilar a substance! How great is the disparity between the seeds that are cast into the earth, and the finest linnen and laces into which they are changed; or, between the wool in its natural state, and the cloths into which it is converted; or, between the materials that are furnished by despicable insects, and the finest silks that are wrought out of such contemptible materials! Even the familiar arts of spinning, weaving, bleaching and dying, have been carried to a perfection that may justly be admired. In expressive damask and tapestry, the inferior labours of the loom and needle emulate the higher arts of the pencil.

In working in wood and stone, in refining the oar, in shaping the hardest metals into many various forms, in moulding the gross and dark substance of earth into vessels

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vessels of so much beauty and purity, above all, in blowing, as by the power of magic, the pure and transparent substance of glass out of such unlikely materials, we have an elegant specimen of the art and capacity of mankind.

Can we, without admiration, reflect upon the various machines by which artists, with a wonderful facility, accomplish works seemingly impossible! With what ease do they form the largest and most unshapely masses into just and proportionable figures! What plenty of elegant and useful manufactures are to be found! What immense works are carried on, and what numbers of ingenious artificers may be observed in opulent nations! How striking would be the sight to the most early inhabitants of this earth, were they to visit some commercial cities, and compare their refinement with the primitive simplicity of mankind!

There is nothing so common, that does not demonstrate the force of human genius. It is this which has directed us so
dis-

distinctly to communicate our thoughts to one another by articulate sounds, and to form a variety of languages. Instructed by the same happy genius, we easily convey our thoughts to the absent, or transmit them to posterity by an alphabet of twenty four letters. By the art of printing, we multiply the copies of our thoughts without end. None of all these things could have been brought to the perfection in which we find them, without the most profound sagacity and deepest attention.

Nor is it enough for the daring genius of mankind to erect monuments of their glory every where upon the land; they likewise raise trophies in the midst of the sea, and ride upon its proud billows. By a curious machinery of wooden vessels, they float upon the surface of the waters, and cut their way among the waves. Rivers, lakes, and seas, cannot stop their passage. They cross from coast to coast, and exchange the commodities of different regions. Instead of shutting them up, and preventing their mutual commerce, as in early times, the liquid
element

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element is forced to promote their commerce, and facilitate an intercourse among the most distant nations. How many tall and stately ships traverse the ocean, and visit the distant regions of the globe! How curious is their structure! How much room is there in the apartments below! How gallant are their sails and flags, and all the appendages above! How glorious is the prospect of mighty fleets! How dreadful are their fights, and thunders upon the waters! How bold and adventurous are the human race, thus to commit themselves to the fiercest tempests*! “ They that go down
“ to the sea in ships, that do business in
“ great waters; these see the works of
“ the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.
“ For he commandeth, and raiseth the
“ stormy wind, which lifteth up the
“ waves thereof. They mount up to the
“ Heavens, they go down again to the
“ depths. Their soul is melted because
“ of trouble. They reel to and fro, and
“ stagger like a drunken man, and are at

* Horat. Lib. 1. Carm. 3.

“ their

MAGNIFICENCE of NATURE. 159

“ their wit’s end *”. In the day time, they are deprived of the sight of land; during the night, they are wrapt up in darkness; yet, by their line and compass, they measure their path in the waters, and God bringeth their ship into the desired haven.

In a word, who can enumerate all those agreeable, curious, and useful arts which are now so common in the world? To what lucky chance, or happy genius shall we ascribe their invention? By what profound observation and sagacity must they have been carried to the high perfection, at which they have at length happily arrived? May it not be reckoned arrogance, to attribute them to human genius alone? Shall not we rather, with the ancients, ascribe them to the divinity, and derive them from the secret inspiration of the All-wise, “ who is wonderful “ in counsel, and excellent in working †”. In truth, these excellent arts may justly

* Psalm cvii. 23, ——— 27. † Isaiah xxviii.
24, ——— 29.

be called divine; and while they display the capacity of the human mind, at the same time declare the perfection of the Creator. For human art is nothing but a ray of the divine, is originally derived from the father of lights from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down, and is variously dispersed among the innumerable objects of his providence.

But whatever display of the divine wisdom and energy is made by those arts which are known among men, there is a more illustrious display of wisdom in the works of nature. Compared with the divine, all human art evanishes. The largest and most glorious machines, contrived and erected by human skill, may be counted as nothing, when laid in the ballance with the magnificent system of the natural world; in which so many and such various bodies, both great and small, have performed their different operations during so many ages, with such an admirable steadiness and regularity, as manifests an energy, wisdom, beauty, and grandeur, beyond expression and beyond thought.

thought. " Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. All nations before him are as nothing." *

Above all, the infinite wisdom, goodness, and energy of the great Creator appear conspicuous, in continually raising up, preserving, and supporting, from the beginning of the world to this day, such immense numbers of animals and rational creatures, whose natures he hath exalted far above the most glorious bodies, which are insensible of life or being. Animated with different degrees of sense, or endued with the more excellent and exalted faculty of reason, they enjoy various degrees of happiness.

* Isaiah xl.

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Their

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Their necessities and wants, their appetites and desires, are infinite; but there is abundance of provision to satisfy and supply them. "The eyes of all wait
 " upon God, and he gives them their
 " meat in due season. He opens his hand,
 " and satisfies the desire of every living
 " thing*. He sendeth the springs into
 " the valleys: they run among the hills:
 " they give drink to every beast of the
 " field: the wild asses quench their thirst.
 " He causes the grass to grow for the cat-
 " tle, and herbs for the service of man,
 " that he may bring forth food out of
 " the earth; and wine that maketh glad
 " the heart of man; and oil to make his
 " face to shine; and bread which strength-
 " eneth man's heart. The young lions
 " roar after their prey, and seek their
 " meat from God. These all wait upon
 " God, that he may give them their meat
 " in due season. That which God gives
 " them they gather. He opens his hand,
 " they are filled with good †". As

* Psalm cxlv. 15, 16.

† Psalm civ.

there

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there is a never failing abundance of animal and rational creatures, whose wants are to be supplied, there is also an exuberant store of materials proper for satisfying all their desires; "the earth is full of the riches of the Lord*."

* Psalm civ. 24.

There is a great falling short in the
animal and mental faculties of the
worse and the highest virtue is also
and excellent those of the highest
virtue all these things are the same
of the virtue of the land.

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animal and mental faculties of the
worse and the highest virtue is also
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PROSPECT VI.

A View of the Distresses of Mankind,
and of the Brute Animals.



M. A. S. W. 1891

It is a very interesting and important question, which we are to be asked, whether it is not the duty of the State to protect the rights of the individual against the power of the majority. The answer is, of course, in the affirmative. The rights of the individual are the foundation of the State, and the State has no right to interfere with them. The rights of the individual are the rights of the citizen, and the citizen has no right to be deprived of them. The rights of the individual are the rights of the citizen, and the citizen has no right to be deprived of them.

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PROSPECT VI.

A View of the Distresses of Mankind,
and of the Brute Animals.



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PROSPECT VI



A View of the
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PROSPECT VI.

THOUGH the wisdom and magnificence of nature ought to excite the highest veneration in all rational creatures; though there is nothing so great or good, which may not be expected from such an admirable system; and though the designs of God must be supposed infinitely more perfect than any that can be conceived or contrived by men; yet our sacred writers, extolling the wisdom of the divine counsels, acknowledge at the same time, that they are beyond the reach of our understanding. "Canst thou by searching
 " find out God? Can'st thou find out
 " the Almighty unto perfection? It is
 " high as Heaven; what canst thou do?"
 &c. *

* Job xi. 7, 8.

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After

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After all that we can conceive of the magnificence with which we are surrounded, there is a mystery in the works of God that we cannot fully comprehend. We are not only ignorant of the means by which various effects are produced, and of the immediate causes from whence they proceed, which are either not at all, or only faintly discerned; but many of the ends which nature proposes, though in themselves most certainly excellent, are, nevertheless, so far beyond our thoughts, and so contrary to our common apprehensions, that their fitness becomes less perspicuous. Clouds and darkness intercept our view, and being held in anxious suspense about the great design of nature, we are often doubtful concerning the final issue of all her mighty works.

This anxiety arises in part from the calamities of all the animals in common, but especially from the distresses of man. The order of the inanimated part of nature, though often mysterious, appears admirably fair, and shines with an extraordinary lustre. Far from being able
to

and of the BRUTE ANIMALS. 169

to explain it, we nevertheless confess its magnificence and beauty, and acknowledge a wisdom infinitely superior to all human understanding. But the distresses of the brute animals, and the afflictions of mankind, are not only difficult to be explained, but raise uneasy doubts in the contemplative and inquisitive mind, and sometimes render it more difficult to perceive the bounty and goodness, than the power and contrivance that are in nature.

Nothing, indeed, is more evident than the admirable contrivance, both in the external frame and internal constitution of animals; by which nature, with an indulgent care, provides for their ease and happiness. In consequence of this, they actually enjoy great and numerous pleasures. Yet, through the delicacy of the bodily organs, they are frequently liable both to internal disorders, and to external accidents, by which they are exposed to many pains and distresses.

As to the brute animals, how extremely short-lived are many of their kinds, even though

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though they arrive at the longest period of
their duration ! How many of them are
killed by accidents in the various stages of
life, and perish every hour ! How many
must die as soon as they are sensible of
their existence, and enjoy but a mo-
ment between the beginning and end of
their lives ! How many are daily killed
for the service of men ! How many,
without any intention, but by an una-
voidable necessity, are trampled upon and
crushed to pieces every moment ! How
many of them are formed to prey upon
other kinds ! Their passions and appe-
tites, their external structure, and inter-
nal constitution, naturally lead and qua-
lify them to hurt, kill, and destroy. They
are hateful to, and hate one another.
The weaker, and more harmless, are
formed to be food to the stronger and fierc-
er kinds. Nor are they void of anxiety,
though incapable, perhaps, of a distinct
idea of death, or of being disturbed with the
apprehension of it at a distance ; for many
of them betray a terror at the sight of their
natural foes ; they avoid them, they fly
from them, and when seized, they appear
to die in cruel anguish.

Be-

Besides, during their short and uncertain lives, how much do they suffer from hunger and cold, from diseases and wounds! Nor does this always happen from carelessness or inattention: 'tis necessary; 'tis unavoidable! No prudence of their own, no prudence or sympathy of others, can prevent these sad calamities.

Thus the prodigious havock of animal life, and the pains to which animals are unavoidably exposed, throw an obscurity on the designs of nature. Nor is it easy for us to comprehend the consistency of that supreme providence, which raises up such great numbers of animals, the least of which, being capable of perception, is infinitely superior to all the glories of inanimated nature; and is of such an admirable contrivance, as by far surpasses all the art and wisdom of man, while at the same time, the same providence seems to make a very slight account of them after they are formed, and exposes millions of them to unavoidable destruction every moment:

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ment: nay, arms and inspires them with
fury and rage against one another.

But to pass by all the other animals, with
whose inward constitutions, pleasures and
pains, we are so little acquainted; let us
turn our thoughts to man, the only ra-
tional animal within our view.

This noble animal is endued with ad-
mirable faculties and powers. His un-
derstanding is penetrating and compre-
hensive. He discovers both sagacity, and
quickness of invention. His memory is
retentive. He extends his thoughts back-
wards and forwards to eternity. His eyes
can reach to stars placed at immeasurable
distances. His imagination stretches it-
self beyond any limit whatsoever. His
reason can compute spaces without end.
He perceives the order and beauty of the
universe. He acknowledges his alliance
with all the visible ranks and tribes of
creatures. He is capable of discovering
the relation in which he stands to each
of them. Hence, a sense of moral beau-
ty.

ty. He traces his relation to the invisible fountain of being, and the immense source of all perfection. To this noble animal, a dominion is assigned over the other animals, and over the earth itself. He is made capable of many sublime enjoyments. But whatever he is interested in at present, though great and glorious, seems contemptible compared with things innumerable, which, though infinitely remote both in time and place, become the objects of his contemplation. Confined to this earth, he is capable of discovering that 'tis but a point, compared with the extent of the works of God. Through the benevolence of his heart, he extends his concern to the most distant stars; not doubting but they may be as worthy of regard as his own habitation, and may be equally remarkable for variety and a curious contrivance. Being unsatisfied with having only seen them at a distance, he pants after more distinct and enlarged views, and a further acquaintance with these glorious works of God. Though his life is limited to a short period, in which

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which alone he can be affected with the
fortunes of this earth, and of its inha-
bitants; yet he feels generous and enlarged
desires after their welfare. He interests
himself in the transactions of ages past
long ago, and of latest posterity. He
plants trees, builds houses, raises monu-
ments; enacts laws, and frames constitu-
tions to last for ages after he is dead.
Neither is he led to this labour so unpro-
fitable to himself, through ignorance of
his fate, or excited by a blind impulse;
but continues his generous cares, know-
ing the uncertainty of his life, and fore-
seeing a speedy dissolution.

Add to this, that he is not unconcerned
about what may happen at death. He
pants after a future existence. For this,
nature seems to have admirably prepared
him. Though his senses, and whatever
depends upon the body, must decay; yet
his judgment grows riper, by years and
experience. How frequently in the de-
cline of life, nay, even upon the brink
of dissolution, is his understanding clearer
and more sound, and his judgment more
vigo-

vigorous than ever! A pregnant presumption, that after death, the soul may exert an independant force, notwithstanding its present connection with the body.

Among the individuals of the human species, many have been highly elevated above the rest, and have become remarkable for their knowledge, wisdom and virtue; yet these wise men have not attained to those high improvements of which nature hath rendered them susceptible. In truth, to train up this noble animal to the perfection of which he is capable, a greater number of years, and a longer course of discipline than nature has allotted him upon this earth, seems absolutely necessary. Entering into life as an infant, continuing so long in infancy and childhood, he can only be imperfectly instructed during this early season. Much remains to be learned in youth. Manhood, nay old age itself, are not sufficient for his complete improvement. He can form distinct ideas of many beautiful and useful arts, his mind conceives many objects

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jects of the most delightful speculation,
but he has neither time nor means to ac-
quire the knowledge of them. "Ars lon-
ga, vita brevis." Before he has been
even tolerably instructed, before he has
learned to make a just estimate of life,
and of the various objects with which he
is surrounded, he decays and dies, ac-
cording to the course of nature and pro-
vidence.

The errors and vices of mankind are
great and numerous, and involve them in
many troubles. But, besides those dis-
tresses into which particular men fall,
merely by their own faults, there are
many unavoidable circumstances in their
situation, which render their improve-
ments in wisdom and virtue precarious,
which expose them to many calamities in
life, and often hurry them prematurely
out of the world.

Writers of all kinds, the gay and ir-
religious, the serious and devout, philoso-
phers and poets, the ancients and the mo-

and of the BRUTE ANIMALS: 177

moderns, have vyed with each another, in giving tragical representations of the disappointments and afflictions of human life.

Among those moderns who have carried this matter farthest, we find one of the most polite and ingenious writers of the age*, who seems fond of indulging the most melancholy thoughts. Would we see the darkest side of human affairs, we need only view them in that gloomy light in which this philosopher has placed them.

It is to be hoped, however, that his calculations will be found erroneous. But though we suppose that upon the whole, good is prepollent; yet the numerous and heavy afflictions of human life, and the various distresses of the brute animals, cast a shade upon the beauties of nature. There are, indeed, rich materials, and

* The celebrated Mr. Maupertuis in his "Essay de Philosophie Morale."

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mighty preparations for the happiness of animals; but has any end been accomplished (it may be asked) worthy of all these mighty preparations? Or, can we conceive that a wise and powerful being, capable of raising up such excellent orders of creatures, and of making such ample provision for their happiness in the rich stores of nature, can consider these scanty measures of happiness his creatures actually enjoy, during their short and uncertain abode upon the earth, as an end worthy of all his care and providence? It may perhaps be allowed, that there is a greater share of happiness than misery, and that upon the whole, good is prepollent: but, is there such a prepollency of good, as seems suitable to infinite wisdom, goodness, and power? How difficult will it be found to free this important question from all perplexity, or to solve all those doubts which are ready to arise in the anxious mind! Here we see but darkly through a glass *. Nature is enveloped in

* 1. Corinthians xiii. 12.

and of the BRUTE ANIMALS. 179
obscurity. Clouds and darkness surround
the throne of God *. He hath made
darkness his secret place. His pavilion
round about him are dark waters, and
thick clouds of the sky †.

* Psalm xcvi. 2.

† Psalm xviii. 11:

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PROS:

and of the House of Representatives.

1911 June 15

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PROSPECT VII.

A Comparifon of the Happinefs and
Mifery within our View, fhewing,
in Answer to Mr. Maupertuis,
that the firft is fuperior.



PROSPECT VII.



A Comparison
Military within
in Answer to Mr. Maudslayi
that the first is superior.

PROSPECT VII.

THOUGH the bulk of mankind easily give themselves up to the first impressions which are made upon them, and do not examine critically what is proposed to their assent; there has been a considerable party of philosophers, or such as have pretended to the name, who, examining, or affecting to examine things to the bottom in order to find out the truth, instead of embracing, have rejected common opinions, and have astonished the world with paradoxes which have appeared shocking to the rest of mankind.

Of these philosophers, some have carried their scepticism so far, as to doubt whether men could be certain of the truth of any one proposition whatsoever.

Others have denied certainty in all cases except one; allowing that we may be certain of this one thing; "that we can know nothing." A discovery, which they accounted the most valuable and profound.

Some have applied this general principle "that we can know nothing" to the particular question concerning the existence of what is called the universe; and have asserted, or maintained it as a probable opinion, that we can never be certain whether any thing really exists or not; that whatever appears to have a real existence, may have nothing more solid in its nature than what is seen in a dream, or during the ravings of a fever, or by the force of a distempered imagination.

Some, who have not gone so far as these already mentioned, have embraced as whimsical a conceit, and have maintained very seriously, that no man has reason to believe, that there is any being really existing in the universe but himself: what vulgar souls conceive to be different from them-

than MISERY within our View. 183
themselves, not being truly so, but only
a series or arrangement of their own ideas.
These ideas (say such philosophers) a
man can know or conceive, but not
any thing else, or any thing which can
justly be said to be without or beyond
himself.

Others have maintained, that every
man is wholly selfish, without any prin-
ciple of benevolence or affection to others,
and that no man can be interested in the
welfare of any living creature but him-
self. Some have expressed this more gross-
ly, not scrupling to assert, that at bot-
tom, every man is a rogue, and that the
man who is said to be most virtuous, is
not distinguished from the greatest villain
by a superior goodness of heart, but only
by a greater degree of knowledge, or ra-
ther cunning. Others have even dared to
assert, that there is no essential distinction
in nature, between virtue and vice; that
there is in reality, no native worth nor
dignity in the one, no vileness nor
deformity in the other: this distinc-
tion depending entirely on education and
fashion,

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fashion, which might have rendered vice honourable, and virtue dishonourable.

Some philosophers have asserted, that the most violent pains of the body, are not really evil to an animal endued with reason and capable of the moral sense.

Some have maintained, that ignorance is better than knowledge; that contemplation is by no means suitable to any animal; that arts and sciences are extremely pernicious, and that a savage and solitary state, is much better for mankind than any society which has been hitherto established.

Philosophers have not been wanting, who have ascribed the formation of the world, and all things in it, to chance; imputing whatever we call regularity or wisdom in the natural or moral world, to the fortuitous concurrence of atoms.

But what has gained the greatest credit, and raised up the greatest number of admirers, and the most able defenders ever since

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since learning came into reputation, is that philosophy which asserts that mankind, and all other rational beings, are wholly destitute of any liberty in acting, and that all events are linked together by the most invincible necessity. According to this system, rational creatures are nothing but curious machines exactly resembling clocks, which are moved by foreign weights in the same manner as our common clocks, with the additional quality of being conscious of what is going on, and giving consent to all the motions. For, as the motions in such clocks, notwithstanding their consciousness, do not arise from any inward activity in the clocks themselves, but arise entirely from the force of the foreign weights; so, according to those who maintain this philosophy, men are only conscious of what passes within them, and are made to consent to what is going on, but have not any inward principle of activity, being wholly passive in receiving perceptions or impressions from without, in a constant succession or series, which perceptions have an irresistible influence to raise desires or a-

ver-

versions in their minds, and as effectually, necessarily and invariably, regulate all their actions, as the weights regulate the wheels and indexes in any piece of clock-work whatsoever.

These philosophers, however, have been so liberal, as to allow sense and consciousness to mankind, while others more extravagant, have dealt less equitably with the brutes, and pronounced them to be mere machines, performing all their motions by a mechanical operation and foreign impulse, without any internal sense or perception whatsoever.

All these paradoxes have been maintained by philosophers; and without any troublesome search, one might find out several others to increase the collection.

We need not therefore be surprized to find so bold a philosopher as Mr. Maupertuis, pronouncing, with little hesitation, that there is more misery than happiness in human life. The numerous and great calamities in the world, have laid a foundation

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dation for such specious arguments for this hypothesis, that not only some subtle philosophers, but several among the vulgar, nay, some devout adorers of providence and divinity, may sometimes be puzzled with the appearances in nature. Mr. Maupertuis is therefore more excusable on this head. However, it is unfortunate for this gentleman, and must raise a strong prejudice against his opinion, that it is unfavourable to the most comfortable of all doctrines, that of a wise and good providence. For, instead of conceiving a system to be good, must we not rather conceive it to be perverse, if it produces more evil than good, or more misery than happiness? For the sake, therefore, of a doctrine which is so necessary for the comfort of mankind, it were greatly to be wished, that the opinion of Mr. Maupertuis, and other philosophers of his complexion, might be found to be erroneous.

'Tis true, it is possible to maintain the wisdom and goodness of providence, and to defend the cause of religion, even upon the hard supposition, that there is more
misery

190. There is more HAPPINESS

misery than happiness in human life. For if we can prove that men are endued with liberty, that they have abused this liberty, and that by this abuse, error and vice have entered into the world, and have produced the calamities of human life; upon these suppositions, we may be able to account for the prepollency of evil, notwithstanding a wise and good government in the world. But, if we can establish the prepollency of good, it must be a great advantage in maintaining the cause of providence. And as the mercies of the Lord are great, as his tender mercies are above all his works*, it may be reasonably hoped, that upon a survey, we shall find more good than evil within our view.

Let us, therefore, try the force of those arguments by which a contrary hypothesis is supported. Mr. Maupertuis has strained the utmost force of his invention, to show that mankind are more miserable than happy. Let us see whether he has

* Psalm cxlv. 9.

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succeeded, or whether, after all the efforts
of his fine genius, his most specious reasonings are not wholly inconclusive.

Because we would often wish to change our perceptions, and to possess other objects than those which we actually enjoy, we ought not to infer, with Mr. Maupertuis, that we are unhappy till we obtain our wish. This desire of change, does not always arise from our perceptions being painful. Seldom does it arise from this cause. It flows from those ideas of good, which are almost continually excited in our minds. The number of these ideas is infinite. They excite desires proportionable to our apprehensions of the greatness of the good, and to our sense of the want of it. Yet this does not render us unhappy. We do not, as Mr. Maupertuis contends, wish all our moments to be annihilated till we obtain what we desire ; or though it were so, it could only be interpreted in this manner, that we desire a greater, more than a smaller good. During this state of mind, we enjoy thousands of pleasures. We are only unhappy

if the desire of change arises from a painful perception of what is present, or if we too keenly desire the absent good.

If a man tormented with the gout or stone, desires to be freed from this cruel pain, he is unhappy, in a certain degree, till the pain be removed. He may, however, in the mean time, enjoy many comfortable reflections; nay, feel many pleasing sensations. Every moment, till the pain is removed, may not be unhappy. What vast sources of consolation in piety and virtue, in the integrity and dignity of his former conduct, in the memory of past enjoyments, or in future hopes: in the prospect of the prosperity of his family, his friends, or his country: in meditations upon the wisdom of providence, the beauties of nature, or the wonders of art! Scarce is there any pain so severe, as not to admit many such comforts, which sometimes greatly alleviate, sometimes quite extinguish it. Even when we are afflicted with the acutest diseases, and when our condition, in appearance, is most deplorable, our calculation would be erroneous, if

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if we should place all the moments on the side of pain. Much more when our circumstances are tolerably easy, and we feel nothing but what happens in the common condition of human life.

The number of desirable objects throughout the wide extent of nature, may be called infinite. Our desires to obtain them for ourselves, for those in whom we are principally interested, and for all beings capable of felicity, are infinite also. We desire them with various degrees of intenseness; often do we feel an ardour, and pant for the noblest enjoyments; yet, such earnest, such extensive desires, do not render us unhappy. Nay, our large and comprehensive views, the origin of our desires, make no inconsiderable addition to our happiness.

Thus, in whatever light we consider it, the principle laid down by Mr. Maupertuis "that all the moments of our life
"are unhappy, from the time in which
"we desire any object, till the time in
O "which

“ which this desire is accomplished,” cannot be admitted.

Another principle maintained by this ingenious author, is equally deceitful, “ All the diversions of mankind (says this philosopher) prove the wretchedness of their condition. In the most common actions; such as taking a bottle, or smoking a pipe, one only seeks to relieve himself from the misery of life.”

It is good to be ingenious and to make deep observations, but they ought to be solid as well as ingenious. Our author's hypothesis, to account for mens desiring amusements, is not of this kind. We cannot call every man unhappy who chuses to play at chess with his friend, or sits down to divert himself at cards. We are not miserable before we begin to play, no more than before we begin to eat; but we chuse play as an agreeable amusement, and prefer it to any other pleasure we can obtain in certain circumstances. We eat and drink, not because we are miserable, but be-

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because we are hungry or thirsty. We smoke a pipe, and perform a hundred other actions, not because we are miserable, but to encrease our enjoyment. The wants which we feel beforehand do not prove us to be wretched, but by the bounty of nature dispose us for a keener relish of pleasure. Must not one be surprised to find such unsatisfying accounts of our nature, and such inconclusive arguments in a piece ascribed to such an ingenious author! Might he not as justly have contended, that all the actions of life, demonstrate the continual wretchedness of mankind, concluding in this manner, "We
" will not do any thing, if we do not in-
" cline to do it, and we will not incline
" to do it, if we do not desire to do it, and
" we cannot desire any thing but because
" we want it, and when we want any
" thing we are unhappy.

But who can be found (says Mr. Maupertuis) who would chuse to live his life over again, and to pass through the same individual scenes? This will perhaps be thought a more specious argument to show

176 There is more HAPPINESS in
the wretchedness of life; but on a close
examination, it will appear equally delu-
sive. For neither is the fact certain, and
though it were, it is not a certain evi-
dence, that there is more misery than hap-
piness in life.

If all mankind expected a future state
after death, in which virtue was to be
amply rewarded, and vice was to meet
with the punishment it deserves; such as
expected to be happier after death, would
not chuse to live their lives over again.
But this does not prove that they had felt
more evil than good; it only shows that
they expected higher pleasures after death.
Others who were afraid of the punishment
due to their crimes, would wish to pass
through the same individual scenes, rather
than sink into greater misery; but neither
does this prove that they had felt more
pleasure than pain.

The greatest part of mankind have ei-
ther such strong hopes or fears of what is
to follow after death, that 'tis scarce pos-
sible for them sufficiently to abstract from
them,

them, in examining the question "whether they would chuse to reiterate their former lives?" Nay, annihilation (if this was what they firmly expected) being always considered as an evil in itself, the prospect of it having nothing comfortable in it, would probably raise such disturbance in the mind, as would render it incapable of forming the most reasonable wish. This prospect might excite one to prefer passing through the same individual scenes, though he had felt more evil than good. On which account, were men to give an answer to this question "whether they would pass their lives over again?" their answer would rather discover, what was their opinion of death than of life.

But allowing that they could pass an unbiassed judgment, and were able likewise to form a just opinion of the true value of whatever they had experienced in life, how shall we be able to discover that they would pronounce in favour of Mr. Maupertuis? Why should he take it for granted, that most men would refuse to live their lives over again, or confess that

they had felt greater misery than happiness in life? I imagine they would rather confess the contrary, and that the generality of mankind are persuaded, that it is better to exist in their present state, such as it is, than not to exist at all, and that life, with all its misfortunes, is an advantage upon the whole.

But though the greatest part of men should prefer annihilation, or an eternal insensibility, to a repetition of the same invariable scenes they had formerly passed through; this will not demonstrate, as this author supposes, that they have actually felt greater pains than pleasures in life. Without making any such supposition, we can name another principle in human nature, which will be sufficient to account for this preference.

Is there not a certain delicacy in human nature which rejects the repetition of the same objects, though highly agreeable in the first enjoyment? Is not the love of variety a natural principle of the human frame? Who does not take delight in an
 • alter-

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alternation of pleasures *. The most rapturous pleasures of sense, cannot last long. No single affection of the heart, no single object of contemplation, however much it pleases for a while, can always satisfy us. The rapture of Archimedes would soon have been turned into satiety, had he done nothing but contemplate the solution of that single problem; the first discovery of which so greatly transported him. No wonder therefore, though many would decline a repetition of the same things, since the same individual enjoyments cloy, and we are formed to delight so much in variety.

It may be observed further, that pleasure and pain are not upon an equal footing, and cannot always be justly ballanced. The same degree of pleasure, will not be generally allowed to compensate an equal degree of pain. Some pleasures appear so rapturous, and the inclination to enjoy

* Quosdam subit eadem faciendi videndique satietas, & vitæ non odium sed fastidium: in quod prolabimur, ipsa impellente philosophia, dum dicimus: quosque eadem?—Multi sunt qui non acerbum judicent vivere, sed superfluum. Senec. Epist. 24.

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them is so strong, that many will run upon
the greatest danger to obtain them, and
expose themselves to such degrees of mi-
sery, as greatly overbalance the pleasures.
On the other hand, some pains are so se-
vere during their continuance, that rather
than submit to them, many would forfeit
a much higher felicity. We cannot there-
fore find out with certainty in any parti-
cular life, the quantity of evil and good,
and determine on which side the balance
lies, by referring to the person's choice
whether he would chuse to be annihilated,
or to run over the same invaried scenes.

Besides, when the strength and vigour
either of body or mind is impaired, at
which, if at any time, men would prefer
annihilation to a repetition of the same
invaried scenes of life, this may justly be
imputed to a natural love of rest and in-
activity. Nor is a willingness to part with
our existence at such a time (if this can be
supposed) a more certain proof that our
pains have exceeded our pleasures, than
the desire of sleep after the labours of the
day, is a proof that the day has been
wretch-

wretched. The more happily we have spent it, the more amply we have been satisfied with good, with the greater satisfaction do we sink down into rest at night. As sleep is justly reckoned an image of death, the choice of either of them depends more upon the temper of the mind, at that moment of time when we make the choice, than upon an accurate judgment which we form of our preceding pleasures or pains. We ought not therefore to consider a refusal to repeat all the former scenes of life, as an infallible proof of an opinion, that in the course of our lives our pains have exceeded our pleasures.

But to proceed to a more particular comparison of our pleasures and pains; they may be divided into two kinds, the bodily, which may be called sensations, as they arise from the senses; and the spiritual, arising from reason and reflection. Let us examine each of the kinds.

In favour of Mr. Maupertuis it must be confessed, that bodily pleasure is confined
within

within more narrow limits than bodily pain. Thus, (1). The pleasures of the body are diminished, but the pains are increased by their duration. (2). The too frequent use of the objects which cause pleasure, puts an end to the pleasure, and is followed by many pains and infirmities; but the continued application of painful objects, in place of rendering them agreeable, produces a greater degree of pain. Again, (3). Exquisite pleasure can only be produced by some parts of the body, while all the parts are capable of giving exquisite pain. And, (4). Though bodily pleasure can only be continued during a short time at once, the hour of death is the only boundary of bodily pain.

But though these four observations of Mr. Maupertuis are just, as well as ingenious; and though there are greater possible degrees of pain than of pleasure; yet in fact (from which we can only argue justly in this case) we enjoy many more pleasures, than we suffer pains from the body. This will be found true, even during the greatest part of our diseases, during

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ing the time of sickness under the infirmities of old age; much more may it be applied to other periods and conditions of life.

The beggar who begs his bread, and is frequently exposed both to hunger and cold; the labouring part of mankind who gain their food by the sweat of their brows, feel many more agreeable than painful sensations. A much greater number of men enjoy health, than are afflicted with sickness. Cruel pains and severe diseases seldom attack us. Sickness commonly continues only for a short time, and this short period does not pass without many comforts. Few are absolutely in poverty, compared with those who are plentifully or tolerably provided for. Few languish in prisons, compared with those who enjoy liberty; and upon the whole, in as far as the sensations alone are estimated, there is a very great balance on the side of pleasure.

Would to God, that in comparing our spiritual pleasures and pains, the same degree

gree of superiority may be found upon the side of the former. It is to be hoped that this is the truth; but perhaps the proof is not equally clear. It is from this quarter chiefly, that writers of a gloomy complexion can draw the strongest arguments in defence of their opinion, "that there is a greater share of misery than happiness in the world." The vices of mankind have a wretched effect in poisoning the joys of life, and give too great a handle for darkning the question concerning the superiority of pleasure.

Would we state this matter truly, we must not satisfy ourselves with a general view, but reduce the inward maladies of the mind to their different kinds. After considering the evils which arise out of each of them, and comparing them with the contrary pleasures, we will be better able to determine on which side the balance lies; and whether that black and formidable train of ugly spectres with which human life is said to be so much infested, will not shrink and vanish, when the

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the brighter and fairer scenes of nature are exposed to view.

§1. Behold then first of all, a numerous croud of evils arising from prospects of danger, and from the uncertainty of human affairs. Gloomy care, killing anxiety, cruel jealousies and suspicions, sudden alarms, and terrifying apprehensions ! These distract the minds, and disturb the happiness of mankind. Whether well or ill founded, the case is much the same, and our imaginary no less than our real fears, have power to rob us of present happiness, and to poison our highest joys.

It must be confessed, this is too often the case ; yet this is not the condition of the great body of mankind. A few only (compared with the rest of the world) and these few, only at particular times, are thus disturbed, and rendered unhappy. Notwithstanding dangers, and the uncertainty of life, as sad accidents rarely happen, there is a general tranquility and security which prevails among men. Their future hopes add much more to their present

sent joys, than their fears add to their pains. Upon the whole, their apprehensions rather render them cautious, and give check to such sanguine hopes as would expose them to disappointments, than disturb their tranquility and felicity. In general, human life is not a life of fear and anxiety, but of hope and confidence. Though we are too often haunted with imaginary alarms, which create a real distress; we are much oftner gladdened with agreeable and chearful prospects, which though perhaps only flattering in the mean time, and too often attended with disappointment, at last yield us much higher pleasures, than can be overbalanced either by the pain of disappointment, or by our timorous apprehensions of future evils. To be convinced of this, let every man examine his own heart, and observe what passes around him in the world.

2. Though this troop of evils may be put to flight, there is another body in reserve. Through distaste of present enjoyments, nay of life itself; through peevishness,

ness, and fretfulness without ground; through eager desires after what is absent; through pride and ambition, mankind undervalue the blessings which they possess, or can easily purchase, and to their perpetual disturbance, grasp at what they account a higher good. Thus the restlessness of their pursuits, though they felt no other malady, may be thought abundantly sufficient to render them more miserable than happy.

But neither can this be applied with justice to the great body of mankind. This distaste and peevishness is chiefly found among those in higher life, who are corrupted by ease and indulgence. They are only a small number who are thus over delicate and refined. Few perhaps are altogether without ambition; yet, the generality of mankind feel it in so small a degree, as to be but little disturbed by towering imaginations and extravagant designs. Their ambition scarce serves to excite them to a proper activity. Whether in a higher or lower rank, there are but few Alexanders, whom nothing will satisfy

tisfy but universal empire, or to be placed at the head of all. Of the greatest part of men it may justly be said, either they are contented with their condition, or if they desire what they cannot obtain, their desires are so calm, moderate and reasonable, that they are far more happy in the enjoyment of what they possess, than miserable through disappointments to their ambition.

3. Neither do mankind feel so much grief for the loss of those comforts which are in their possession, or on account of the positive evils which they feel, as upon the whole renders them more miserable than happy. Some indeed pine away all their days. Melancholy and anguish, prey upon their spirits, and feed upon their vitals, but they are only a small number who are consumed in this manner. During our heaviest afflictions, many comforts remain to alleviate our grief. The sorrows of the greatest part, are either very moderate, even when they are at the greatest height, or if at any time they rise high, they abate soon, and are but of short continuance. So that in truth,
grief

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grief is far less dangerous to our repose, than we would be apt to conclude at first view, from its formidable appearance.

4. But, are there not more hateful, or more furious passions, sufficient of themselves to render us unhappy? How many are consumed with envy, tormented with anger, tortured with revenge! The favours which fortune bestows on their neighbours, real or imaginary injuries done to themselves, shake their whole frame, and drive them on to madness. They taste no joy till they have perpetrated some mighty crime, or executed some direful purpose. But no sooner have they done the horrid deed, than they are dreadfully terrified with a sight of their guilt, and pay dear for the momentary pleasure. All this must be confessed. These malicious and turbulent passions, too often interrupt the easy flow of our affections, and disturb our happiness. They are as distressing as they are vicious; yet upon the whole, they are either not so frequent, or not of so long continuance, or they do not come to so great a height, nor become

so cruelly severe, as not to be greatly overbalanced by those more numerous and regular joys which arise from the calmer and kinder affections of mankind. Upon a just computation, that part of human life which is under the dominion of such spiteful or boisterous passions, is short, compared with that part which is spent in a serene and joyful benevolence.

5. It is, indeed, true, that there is much weakness, ignorance, folly, and depravity in the world: besides the more flagrant vices, and more furious passions of mankind, there are innumerable imperfections and irregularities of a less atrocious nature. All these are accompanied with inward pain. Every passion not duly ballanced, whether it be too weak or too strong, is productive of some inward ailment. Who therefore can be supposed sufficient to compute all those vexations of mind, which are natural to such imperfect creatures? Was there no other evidence, the frequent changes of their opinions, the instability of their resolutions; nay, their repentance itself, too often

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ten more painful to the inward sense, than
effectual for the correction of their errors,
manifestly show how much they are dis-
satisfied with their own conduct and con-
dition.

But notwithstanding all these vices and
weaknesses, which indeed are great and
numerous, and can never be sufficiently
lamented, it must be acknowledged, on
the other hand, that imperfect as men
are, they discover a high regard to natural
justice and benignity, and employ them-
selves much more in social intercourse in
offices of friendship, in innocent, just and
beneficent actions, than in a wicked and
malicious exercise of their power. There
is a great deal of honesty and good mean-
ing among men. The character of every
man is of a mixed kind. Divines and
moralists will not allow that the greatest
part of them are thoroughly virtuous.
Yet there is certainly such a high quan-
tity of an inferior and more imperfect vir-
tue, as secures to them inward pleasures,
much superior to their pains. Notwith-
standing their fickleness and instability,

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they are far more satisfied than dissatisfied with their own conduct. That very concern which arises from remorse and repentance, is more allied to pleasure than to pain. As our ingenious author observes, it contains a cure for that distress which it brings along with it, and a preservative against future pains of the same kind. The more sensibly they are felt at any particular time, we shall be in less danger of feeling them afterwards.

6. Besides these enjoyments which are immediately derived from virtue, or a goodness of heart, the contemplation of truth, and the pursuits of knowledge, are fertile sources of bliss. There is a lively joy which springs up in the mind upon its enlarging its prospects, and tracing the beautiful relations and wise designs of nature and art. And though in this, there is also an alloy, though much study is a weariness of the flesh *; though the powers of the soul, as well as those of the body, languish by too constant exercise: yet,

* Ecclesiastes, xii. 12.

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as our ingenious author likewise confesses, there is a remarkable advantage on the side of the pleasures of the mind. The pleasures which arise from virtue and knowledge, (1). Do not pass away with rapidity. (2). Are not weakened with enjoyment. (3). Do not render the mind feeble. On the contrary. (1). They are durable. (2). They are encreased by being continued or repeated. (3). They fortify the mind. Happily too, they are much under our own command, and providence hath put it in our own power to indulge in them to the full. Thus, after making every reasonable allowance for the weaknesses and vices of mankind, there is enough to convince us that our reason and reflection, as well as our senses, are sources of much greater pleasure than pain.

In this manner, if we take a more particular survey of human life, we shall see less reason to complain of its wretchedness. Let us not magnify either our misfortunes or our vices. Let us not indulge ourselves in gloomy speculations apart from the world. Let us give up our false and peevish

vish theories of human nature, take a share in the business of life, mix in the assemblies of mankind, observe how much pleasure they feel in their labours, as well as in their diversions; during their distresses, as well as in their happier seasons. Let us listen to their discourse; behold the cheerfulness of their faces, and the gaiety of their appearance; consider the lively and innocent joys of a more early age, when they are free from anxiety and care; the more solid and extensive plans of their riper years, and the calmness and tranquility of old age, and we shall be convinced that all their secret chagrins, bear but a small proportion to their more numerous, more various, more constant, and more lasting enjoyments.

It will be impossible, however, to demonstrate this to the conviction of all men. It is not capable of mathematical or metaphysical, but only of moral evidence. Men must be referred to their feelings, and to their experience, and will differ greatly in their sentiments, according to their different dispositions, and the dif-

different circumstances of their lives. Most things have two handles, and may be represented in different lights. Happy the man who steadily views them in that light, which is not only the clearest, but the most agreeable. In this respect, Mr. Maupertuis is truly unfortunate, as his opinions must render him incapable of those encouraging and rapturous views of nature, for which there is a real foundation: And though his sentiments on this subject, are not inconsistent with the belief of a wise and good providence; yet, in so far as the doctrine of providence depends upon reason, and the light of nature, the argument must appear stronger, in proportion as we can see more clearly, that there is more happiness than misery in human life.

than I have within our view.

different circumstances of their lives.

Most things have two shades, and many

be represented in different lights. Hence

the man who flexibly views them in that

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ture, the argument seems weaker than it

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see that there is more happiness than misery

in human life.



PROSPECT VIII.

Of Liberty and Necessity.



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PROSPECT VIII.

THOUGH the author of the “*Essai de Philosophie Morale*” is unfortunately of opinion, that the pains of human life are greater than its pleasures; yet, happily, he establishes a principle which serves to vindicate the conduct of providence; since it may be inferred from his doctrine, that mens misery ought to be imputed to their own folly and vices, and not to the order of nature.

According to this principle, men are endued with liberty, by which “they have power over their actions, and are masters of their own fate. At least, they may contend so successfully against the greatest pains in nature, that if they cannot at all times entirely overcome them,

“ them, they may at all times prevent a
“ total overthrow.”

This power, which we can exert over our actions, and over nature itself in such a high degree, arising from liberty, is acknowledged, by this acute writer, to belong to human nature. “ The Sophist
“ (says he) may dispute against it, but if
“ we will honestly look into our own
“ hearts, we will be sensible of such a
“ power within us. The nature of it is
“ indeed mysterious, but that there is such
“ a power is altogether incontestible.”

If this principle is well founded, the question “ Whether there is a greater sum
“ of pleasures or pains in human life ?” is of much less consequence. For if we are truly possessors of liberty, there will be a sure foundation for distinguishing between the works of God and men; on which supposition, however much men may have disfigured those scenes in which they have been suffered to act a part, the great drama of the “ great Poet” or Creator, may be found to be perfect.

It

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It will, therefore, be proper to examine whether we are possessed of such a power as Liberty, by which we are left masters of ourselves, have truly a part to act, and are, as it were, joint creators, or more properly workers together with God,

Without doubt, the acknowledgment of such an inward principle, is most consonant to our internal feelings, most consonant to the common sense, and common notions of mankind; and most agreeable to the apprehensions of those who first established laws, government, and religion among men.

On the other hand, many philosophers contend, that liberty is a contradiction: that it is impossible in nature: that these internal feelings to which men refer (if such feelings must be acknowledged) are either delusive, or of too obscure a nature to give any light in this question: that the common opinion of mankind is a bad test of truth; and that whatever may be the opinion of the multitude, or of the enthusiastical and superstitious part of the world,

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world, both religion and government may be shewed to be consistent with those indissolvable chains of an absolute necessity, by which all creatures whatsoever, ever were, and to all eternity, ever shall be subjected.

It is not my design, in these Prospects, to interpose in the dispute that has long subsisted between the Calvinists and the Arminians, concerning the liberty of the will, and the decrees of God; or to propose middle schemes; or to pass any judgment in any question which may be supposed to be allied to such a subject. But since there are different opinions, and the world are greatly divided in these matters, it may be useful to observe what may be said on either of these systems, to vindicate providence, and to account for those evils which are supposed to cast a blemish on the works of nature. In this view, it will not be necessary to enter deeply into these intricate debates, or nicely to define the words "liberty" and "necessity." This might give occasion to a logomachy. It will be sufficient to oppose two schemes, which

which are plainly contradictory: the one, "that it was possible in nature, that many things might have happened differently from what they have done; or, that the world might have been different in many respects from what it actually is." The other; "that this is, and ever was impossible." After stating these two systems, and taking notice briefly of what may be pleaded for either of them, by their different patrons and defenders, it will be proper to consider what may be said on each of them, to vindicate the wisdom and bounty of providence.

On the one hand, it is pleaded by those who would support the scheme of an absolute uncontrollable necessity, to which they would subject all creatures, that as it is confessed that bodies are merely passive, performing all their motions necessarily, according to the impressed force; and as beings, which are only capable of instincts, are invariably guided by these instincts; so rational creatures, whether higher or lower, can only be excited to action, by motives arising in a constant suc-

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succession from a series of perceptions; in receiving which, though it must be confessed they are entirely passive; yet these perceptions have an irresistible influence to raise desire or aversion, which, again, as necessarily determine the choice, and direct the pursuits of these rational creatures, as the weights or springs determine the motions in a piece of clock-work. What can be more inconceivable (do they say) than that a rational creature should chuse to act without any motive, without any view, without any reason, to determine his choice? Or that he should prefer, where he sees no ground for preference? "When a resolution is taken, and "a choice is made, upon what is it founded? (says an ingenious writer) certainly "upon some reason or motive, however "silent or weak. No man in his senses "ever made choice of one thing before "another, without being able to assign "a reason, weak or strong, for the preference.—If this be an undoubted fact, "it follows of consequence, that the determination must result from that motive which has the greatest influence for
" the

" the time; or from what appears the best
 " and most eligible upon the whole.—
 " Men are not always rational in their de-
 " termination; they often act from whim,
 " passion, or humour; motives loose and
 " variable as the wind.—Their influence,
 " however, is equally necessary with that
 " of the most rational.—Such is our con-
 " stitution, that we cannot exert a single
 " action, but with some view, aim, or
 " purpose.—The prevailing motive neces-
 " sarily determines the will, and the will
 " necessarily produces the action, unless it
 " be obstructed by some foreign force.—
 " Every inclination and choice is unavoid-
 " ably caused or occasioned by the pre-
 " vailing motive.—Where an action is ex-
 " erted in order to bring about some end
 " or event, this end or event must be the
 " object of desire.—If we do not desire to
 " accomplish an event, we cannot possibly
 " act in order to bring it about. Desire
 " and action, are then intimately con-
 " nected.—Our desires obviously, are not
 " under our own power, but are raised by
 " means that depend not upon us; and if
 " our desires are not under our own pow-
 " er,

“er, neither can our actions. Liberty,
 “as opposed to moral necessity, must sig-
 “nify a power to act in contradiction to
 “desire—or to any view, purpose, or de-
 “sign we can have in acting; which power,
 “besides that no man was ever conscious
 “of it, seems to be an absurdity altoge-
 “ther inconsistent with a rational nature.
 “—At this rate we could not rely on any
 “man. Promises, oaths, vows, would be
 “vain; for nothing can ever bind or fix
 “one who is influenced by no motive.
 “The distinction of characters would be
 “at an end; for a person cannot have a
 “character who hath no fixed or uniform
 “principle of action. Nay, moral virtue
 “itself, and all the force of law, rule, and
 “obligation, would, on this hypothesis, be
 “nothing; for no creature can be the sub-
 “ject of rational or moral government,
 “whose actions, by the constitution of its
 “nature, are independent of motives, and
 “whose will is capricious and arbitrary.
 “To exhort, to instruct, to promise, to
 “threaten, would be to no purpose. In
 “short, such a creature, if such could
 “exist, would be a most bizzarre and un-
 “ac-

“accountable being; a mere absurdity in
 “nature, whose existence could serve no
 “end.—The mind of man is passive, in
 “receiving impressions of things as good
 “or evil: according to these impressions,
 “the last judgment of the understanding
 “is necessarily formed, which the will ne-
 “cessarily obeys.”—Hence, not the smal-
 lest link of the universal chain of causes
 and effects can be broken, nor any one
 thing be otherwise than it is *.

Thus do philosophers maintain an un-
 avoidable necessity in all the actions of
 men; from which doctrine it seems to be
 a necessary consequence, That the author
 of nature is accountable for all the evils
 which affect the human race.

The argument in favour of an absolute
 necessity, will proceed much in the same
 manner in the case of all rational beings

* These arguments for moral necessity in opposition
 to liberty, are quoted from a most ingenious essay “of
 “Liberty and Necessity;” among a collection of essays
 on the principles of morality and natural religion. 2d.
 edit. London, 1758.

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whatsoever. None of them can act without or against motives: God himself must be guided in the same manner. The difference can only lie here; that as he is of all beings the most highly rational, he must always be directed by reasons which are truly the best; and that he does not derive his perceptions from any other being, but has them from all eternity, by an original necessity in his own nature. However, according to these philosophers, this cannot leave him the least degree of liberty in acting; since he is necessarily influenced by those eternal perceptions, and must always do what is best. Thus all things above and below, are linked together by an uncontrollable necessity, and nothing could ever have happened but in the precise manner in which it has actually happened.

The most able patrons of the liberty of rational beings, are far from denying that these arguments are specious. They confess that the question concerning liberty is mysterious. They allow that this part of philosophy is very perplexed, and
has

has given occasion to thorny disputes in all learned and inquisitive ages.

But they will not for this reason, abandon the defence of liberty. They contend, that liberty, though mysterious, ought not to be denied; and that the internal feelings, or consciousness, or belief, or fancy of the human mind (or whatever it is, or by whatever name that shall be called, by which we imagine ourselves to be free) ought not to be deemed delusive, on account of the strongest metaphysical arguments, taken from the nature of our perceptions, or from the force or influence of motives. Nay, as the subject is so mysterious, and the arguments are only metaphysical, this is a sufficient reason (according to such gentlemen) why these feelings of liberty ought not to be pronounced delusive; the consequences of pronouncing thus boldly, and subjecting mankind to the indissoluble and fatal chains of an absolute necessity, being of too dangerous importance to be risked for the sake of the most specious metaphysical arguments, or more properly, metaphysi-

cal quibbles that can possibly be invented in so difficult a subject.

How narrow and limited (say the anti-metaphysical philosophers) is the capacity of man? How far is he from being able to explain all the properties of bodies, and the various powers by which their motions are influenced? Yet bodies are only passive: they yield blindly to that force which is impressed: they have no inward principle or activity by which their motions can be concealed. They are also the objects of our senses, and we can make a thousand experiments upon their substance. Yet we are not able to trace the manner in which they operate on many occasions. How much less is it to be expected that we should be able to explain the secret springs of action, in a spirit which is neither visible to the eye, nor is the object of any other external sense, nor stands in need of a foreign impulse, but is endued with an inward principle of activity.

If there is any such thing as a substance in the creation, this invisible being is most
cer-

certainly a substance. The soul of man, or that which each of us calls ourself, which notwithstanding all the changes in our bodies, or alterations in our methods of thinking, remains the same identical self, as long as we preserve our consciousness, is certainly of a dignity far superior to the whole system of matter. This system, how large, how glorious soever, is wholly insensible of its own existence. Its existence cannot be of any advantage to itself. It has been raised up, and is preserved for the sake of those spiritual beings which are made capable of perceiving it. The system of matter is indeed real. When spirits perceive a body by any of their senses, they do not perceive nothing, but something that is real; yet if a comparison can be allowed, the existence of a spirit may justly be said to be more real. Compared with this, the existence of bodies is of a less substantial, and more shadowy nature. Consciousness of being, is the most certain sign of real existence.

But though spirits are certainly, of all beings, the most real, there is something

thing very mysterious in their nature. As for other spirits besides our own, in strict propriety of language, and according to the clearest expressions in philosophy, perhaps we cannot be said to form an idea of them, or to perceive them. To conceive, rather than to perceive them, is perhaps a more proper expression. We conceive them as images of ourselves, or as having a resemblance to our own spirits, and as endued with the same kind of faculties. By heightening these faculties as much as is possible, and removing all imperfections, we rise to a conception of the Deity. We are indeed more intimately acquainted with our own spirits; we are inwardly conscious of their existence, and of their powers, faculties, and affections. But notwithstanding this inward consciousness, we are far from being able to unfold the nature of that active being we call ourself; we cannot explain how it performs its various operations. Of the operations themselves, we are inwardly conscious, but the nature of the being itself, abstracted from its operations, is a profound mystery. What it is that operates

rates distinct from the operation; what it is that thinks, perceives, conceives, deliberates, wills, determines itself, and in what manner, from what inward principle; whether wholly from what we call motives, or only in part; or whether what we call motives in strict speech have any influence at all, and whether there is not a very different principle of determination, are questions which perhaps we shall never be able fully to resolve. One thing, however, the asserters of liberty can never allow, that men are absolutely uncontrollably, or irresistibly determined by the force of motives arising from perceptions or impressions of good and evil from without, in a constant succession, in receiving which perceptions they are wholly passive. In opposition to this, they maintain, that whatever is the principle of their activity, it does not arise from this foreign force or influence alone; but resides, partly at least in the mind itself, which has an inward principle of activity. On which account, men have a free choice, are masters of their own actions, produce them, and are accountable for them; or the ac-
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tions are truly theirs, and are imputable to them. Of all which, they are so sensible, that they are inwardly conscious of deserved esteem, or blame, according to the nature of their actions.

In order to prevent disputing as much as possible, let it be understood, that the most able defenders of liberty do not pretend to explain this liberty of the mind, or shew how the mind is determined, or determines itself: they confess they cannot explain this fully, and think it is inexplicable in our present condition. They only assert, that what determines the mind, is not wholly from what is foreign, but arises, partly at least, from something in the mind itself; and that the contrary proposition, that the mind can only be determined by what is called the influence or force of motives, or prospects presented to it by means of something external, is only an hypothesis invented to explain the manner of our acting, and is not supported (as the metaphysical philosophers pretend) by any demonstration or distinct view of philosophic truth.

It

It is impossible that any man can believe against a clear demonstration of the contrary proposition. A demonstration overbalances all evidence on the contrary side. For which reason, if it could be clearly demonstrated to mankind, from undeniable principles of reason and human knowledge, that they never could have acted otherwise than they had done; but from the first moment of their being, were laid under an absolute necessity of being always determined by what we call motives presented to the mind, by or from external causes; in such a case, they could not possibly believe themselves guilty. For as no man can be guilty who does not determine himself, but is wholly determined by others (which will be illustrated in the course of the argument) so no man who knows this, can ever believe himself guilty. Now since it is confessed, that this pretended demonstration of our being under a foreign influence, consequently of our not being guilty, is not able to deliver those philosophers who pretend to see the force of it from the
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sense of guilt, but leaves them to condemn themselves as heartily as the mere vulgar; this is an irrefragable demonstration that there is not any real, but only a pretended demonstration in this case. In truth, what is called a demonstration in this matter, is nothing, and can be nothing but a specious sophism, vain philosophy, or play of words, which cannot prevail against the inward feeling and consciousness of the mind; and can justly be called nothing but darkening counsel by words without knowledge *.

We ought not therefore, for the sake of this vain philosophy, to pronounce the inward feelings of liberty to be delusive: we ought not, on account of such metaphysical arguments, to establish the doctrine of an absolute necessity, which is contrary to the common sense of mankind, and (however innocently or piously it may be maintained by philosophers or divines) seems, in its own nature, subversive of laws, government and religion.

* Job xxxviii. 2.

The sum of the debate seems to be this briefly. The defenders of an absolute necessity, pretend that they cannot conceive, nay that it is altogether inconceivable and impossible, that rational beings, whether higher or lower, can be excited, moved, influenced, or determined to act, unless from views or prospects, which move or influence them, and are therefore called motives. The greatest strength of their cause consists in the difficulty there is in explaining the reason or manner of acting in rational natures, according to any other hypothesis; and in particular, in conceiving how the supreme being, who is infinitely perfect, can be determined to act in any other manner than by preferring that one thing, which in every case he cannot but see to be best upon the whole. The supporters of liberty, confess that this is a mysterious subject: they do not pretend to explain in what manner rational beings, whether lower or higher, or the highest, are influenced or moved, but they will not admit the former hypothesis,

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1. Because the nature of the mind, and the manner in which it is influenced, is not fully known, and therefore this particular hypothesis may not be just.

2. Because the doctrine, that nothing could possibly have happened otherwise than it has done; that neither could God have formed the Universe in any respect different from what he hath formed it; nor could mankind, in any one instance, have acted in any way different from what they have done; seems at first view, to be one of those paradoxes invented by philosophers contrary to the common sense of mankind, and cannot be certainly concluded from such an imperfect knowledge as we can only attain to in such sublime subjects.

3. Because the doctrine that men are wholly determined from without, in the manner that has been explained, is of such dangerous importance, and draws along with it what may be called such alarming consequences, as ought to deter us from
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embracing it, unless it were perfectly clear and certain, which is not the case.

4. Because the doctrine, so far as it relates to men, when it is more accurately examined, will be found inconsistent with that notion of guilt which is natural, and cannot be eradicated out of their minds. This is the sum of the debate, but it will be proper to illustrate some of these arguments more fully.

Whoever duly reflects on the early ages of the world, will not readily admit, that mankind, in these ancient times, believed the scheme of an absolute necessity. The simplicity of these ages, rendered them incapable of such a refinement. Not only did the first men imagine themselves to be free agents, but in all probability the world was old before any philosopher arose, who taught the doctrine of an absolute necessity. Long before such a doctrine had been heard of, laws had been formed, government had been established, and tribunals for punishing the vicious had been erected.

If

If we examine what is most agreeable to the natural course of affairs, it will be difficult to conceive how such establishments could ever have been thought of, if any other doctrine had prevailed than that of liberty. Or if men had imagined, that all actions were necessary, and that nothing could happen otherwise than it actually did, that they would ever have agreed to juridical punishments.

Metaphysical philosophers may indeed imagine, and most sincerely believe, that human judges and tribunals are consistent with such a doctrine. After such institutions have been established, they may be continued; though the doctrine of necessity has crept in among philosophers; but the first institution of them, must have been in times before any such doctrines had been known in the world.

So far is it from being in the least probable, that if the bulk of mankind had believed the doctrine of an absolute incontrollable necessity, they would have established judges and tribunals for punishing

nishing the guilty; that it is highly probable when such a doctrine was first published, mankind were not only surpris'd, but greatly shocked at it on this very account, that it must have been conceived to be contrary to morality, and inconsistent with the justice of human laws. For which cause, the doctors who first taught it, must have found themselves oblig'd, from a regard to their character, to propound it very cautiously and with many apologies. Such caution has indeed been necessary for the metaphysical philosophers in every age: for tho' whole nations have profess'd a belief, that was perhaps, at bottom, inconsistent with the doctrine of liberty; yet they have imagin'd that they actually maintained it: and the doctrine of an absolute necessity, having in general been thought extravagant, many specious answers have been offer'd to the objections which have been rais'd against it.

But notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts, and the most ingenious solutions of difficulties, in which many of the most acute men who ever appear'd in the

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world,

world, have exercised their great talents, the case remains, and always will remain, altogether insolvable. However much the metaphysical doctors may boast of the strength of their cause, it will be found impossible to defend the justice of human punishments, on the supposition of an absolute necessity.

Liberty is the only foundation of guilt, and of a just condemnation by a human judge. No man is punishable, when it is evident, that though he killed his neighbour with a sword, he had neither any intention, nor any inclination to kill him, but that the sword was forcibly put into his hand, and his hand was forcibly impelled to thrust it into his neighbour's body. Wherever a man is deprived of his liberty, and put under external force, he is deemed to be innocent.

There is a difference indeed between internal and external force, or between the force that is used on the body, and that which is used on the mind. But whether it is used on the one or the other,

if it proceeds from an external agent, and is a real force, the rule of judgment must be ever the same. Whether a man compels me to commit an unlawful action by applying external force to my body, or by charms, potions, magic, sorcery, or any foreign influence on my mind; if this is made evident to a human tribunal, I ought to be acquitted by my judges.

The argument will be equally strong in the present subject of debate. It is not sufficient to justify the punishment of a wicked man, that he has had vicious affections, in consequence of which he committed a hurtful action. If it be supposed, that from the first moment of his being, he was laid under an absolute necessity by an external agent in all his inclinations, and in all the actions of his life; nothing he hath done can justly be imputed to him, but to the being who subjected him to this cruel necessity. What injustice therefore must it be in any human tribunal, to call such a miserable wretch to an account, and to punish him for any crimes whatsoever. In

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truth, he neither deserves to be punished nor rewarded, for any thing which he hath done or can possibly do.

'Tis true it may be pleaded, that human tribunals are necessary, though mankind have no liberty, but are subjected to an absolute necessity. 'Tis for the benefit of mankind, it may be said. 'Tis necessary for preserving the order of the world, that actions which are dangerous to society should be prevented; or when they are committed, should be followed by painful consequences. Abstracting from the question, whether such actions can be called vices or not, and whether the persons who commit them can be said to be criminals; the actions in their own nature are dangerous to mankind, and for this reason they must be curbed. A judge might say to the person who hath perpetrated the action, " We must deter mankind
" from such hurtful actions, no mat-
" ter whether they are crimes or not;
" we can only deter them by punishments,
" which we shall consider in no other
" light, than as powerful motives to ex-
" cite

“ cite to a conduct which is beneficial to
“ society. These punishments cannot be
“ inflicted at random; for they would
“ not afford a sufficient motive to cause
“ mankind to abstain from the hurtful
“ actions. A rule must therefore be laid
“ down, for pointing out the person who
“ is to be punished for the public good.
“ What better rule can be established,
“ than that the person who hath com-
“ mitted the action should suffer? This
“ will deter others from doing the like,
“ and excite better affections. You, the
“ person accused, have committed this
“ hurtful deed. This has been clearly
“ proved against you. The law con-
“ demns you to bear the punishment for
“ your correction or destruction, or for
“ the correction and benefit of mankind.
“ Do not repine against the sentence, but
“ suffer it patiently for your own, or for
“ the public good.”

Some, perhaps, might be convinced,
or at least puzzled by such reasonings.
The authority, the justice, or the sup-
posed superior talents of the judges, might

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confound and silence them. But if the person accused was an acute philosopher, and did not stand in awe of his judge, how easily might he make a reply? "Why should I suffer (might he answer) I who have done nothing to deserve this condemnation? 'Tis true, I committed the action, but from the first moment of my being, I have been under an absolute necessity. I have been necessarily determined in this, and in every other action of my life. I could not do any other thing but what I have done. You who are my judges know this to be true. Do not, therefore, impute any thing to me. Do not make me suffer for the crimes of another who hath laid the snare for me, and put me under a cruel necessity. Nature, perhaps, has a just title to punish me according to her own schemes of working, and according to the connections which she has established. This is not the place to dispute her rights, nor can we hinder nature from acting as she pleases. But you have no title to sacrifice me for the public good. Do not you commit in-
" justice,

“justice. Do not you erect, nor give
 “any sanction to cruel and unjust tribu-
 “nals. Do not you add to the calami-
 “ties which are brought upon us by na-
 “ture. We will be forced to submit to
 “her laws, but there is not equal reason
 “or necessity for submitting to your injus-
 “tice.”

But the judges may be supposed to
 reply. “Not only did you, the person
 “accused, commit this deed, but you
 “committed it voluntarily. No man con-
 “strained you. You committed it from
 “choice. You preferred doing it, to every
 “other action, at the time when you did
 “it. You deliberated upon it. You con-
 “sidered the reasons and arguments on
 “both sides. You put the question to
 “yourself, whether you would do it or
 “not, and at length, you determined
 “yourself to do it. Do not therefore
 “blame either the law, or the judges;
 “but blame yourself, and submit to that
 “fate which you have brought upon your-
 “self, by your own unworthy choice to
 “perpetrate a wicked action.”

" It is true, too true indeed (the suppos-
 " ed criminal might reply) that I did it vo-
 " luntarily, or from choice : but here is my
 " greatest misfortune, for which I have
 " reason to complain most justly and
 " bitterly ; first, against nature, or the
 " author of nature ; and in the second
 " place, against the injustice of human
 " laws. You know well that I am a poor
 " creature, made to act as I have done
 " in every circumstance of my life. It is
 " not long since I came into the world.
 " I did not make myself, I was made by
 " another. I received my nature, and all
 " my faculties mediately or immediately
 " from nature, or from the author of
 " nature. I had not a choice what I
 " should be, or with what faculties I
 " should be endued. I had not a choice
 " in what manner I should be determined
 " or influenced, but nature resolved, that
 " a train of perceptions in a constant suc-
 " cession, should be presented to me, with-
 " out any influence of mine ; that I
 " should be wholly passive in receiving
 " these perceptions or impressions ; and
 " that I should be uncontrollably, or ir-
 " re-

“ resistibly moved, influenced, or con-
 “ strained by them, according to the force
 “ which I was made to feel from an ex-
 “ ternal cause. Hence all my misery ! At
 “ that unlucky moment when I committed
 “ this hurtful (I cannot call it criminal)
 “ action, I was irresistibly moved by these
 “ impressions from a foreign power. I
 “ had no power to resist them. My will,
 “ my choice, my inclination, were con-
 “ strained to yield, not indeed by any cor-
 “ poral violence, for of this they are in-
 “ capable ; but by a force suited to their
 “ nature, a force of another kind indeed,
 “ but fully as strong, nay irresistible.
 “ Have pity upon me ; have pity upon me,
 “ my judges : you all know this to be true,
 “ you yourselves are under the same in-
 “ fluence. You are more fortunate in-
 “ deed than I have been ; you have felt
 “ another set of perceptions. Hitherto
 “ you have been safe from human tribu-
 “ nals ; yet you do not know how soon
 “ you may be brought before them, for
 “ doing an action, to which, at the time
 “ of doing it, you shall be irresistibly mo-
 “ ved. Make my case your own ; lay
 down

“ down a precedent to which you may
 “ appeal in the same condition. Consider
 “ seriously these arguments which I have
 “ offered. I have set them before you,
 “ that I might move you to be merciful
 “ and just, and to contribute, in your
 “ high sphere, to abolish cruel punish-
 “ ments of the innocent.”

“ But are not you self-condemned (the
 “ judge might reply) are not you inwardly
 “ convinced of your guilt? Do not you
 “ blame yourself? Did not you blame
 “ yourself for committing this action, the
 “ moment after you had committed it?
 “ Your conscience testifies against you, and
 “ tells you, you are guilty. Why will you
 “ therefore by vain subterfuges, and idle
 “ cavils, seek to justify yourself, to lay
 “ the blame of your guilt on nature,
 “ and to reproach the laws of your coun-
 “ try, and of all mankind?”

“ I cannot deny, my judges (the party
 “ accused might answer) I cannot deny that
 “ I am now made sensible that I am guilty.
 “ This is a bitter aggravation of my misery,
 “ and

" and should move you to pity. I had, in-
 " deed, a faint idea, before I committed the
 " action, that it was not a right one, and
 " that I ought not to have committed it;
 " but this fainter sense was overpowered
 " by a more lively perception of mighty
 " advantages, which were to follow upon
 " my committing the action. I was con-
 " vinced that the commission of it was
 " best upon the whole. This convic-
 " tion was so strong, that it became ir-
 " resistible. Unhappily I fell into the
 " snare, and perpetrated the deed. But
 " no sooner had I done it, than, oh
 " cruel nature! I was immediately made
 " to see, as it were, with other eyes. Ano-
 " ther set of perceptions rushed into my
 " mind. Contrary to truth and reason, I
 " was forced to admit, that I might, and
 " ought to have acted otherwise than I
 " did. This fancy still remains with me,
 " and greatly heightens my misery. It is
 " not possible for me wholly to deliver
 " myself from this galling thought. But
 " though this spectre of guilt haunts me
 " day and night, and often intrudes itself
 " into my mind, I will never yield my
 " full assent to that opinion of which it
 " would

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“ would persuade me. In opposition to
“ such a belief, I know, and can demon-
“ strate, from the principles of reason and
“ human knowledge, that I neither was,
“ nor possibly could be guilty. It becomes
“ you indeed, my judges, to acquit me, since
“ ye all know that I was at that time, and
“ have been ever since I had a being, un-
“ der an incontroulable necessity from ex-
“ ternal causes.”

Thus, according to the patrons of liberty, it will be found impossible to vindicate punishments by a human tribunal, upon the supposition that the person punished, was laid under an absolute necessity by external causes in all his inclinations, and in the whole of his conduct, from the first moment of his being. It is of no consequence in this argument, what name shall be given to this necessity; whether it shall be called natural, mechanical, physical, moral, rational, or by any other name, if it is incontroulable, and arises from external causes.

It is true, beneficent affections, wherever they appear, or in whatever manner they

they are excited, may well be called amiable and useful. Whether they deserve it or not, they may safely be encouraged by praises and other rewards. But the case of punishments for hurtful actions is extremely different. 'Tis manifest injustice to punish the person who committed them, if he is supposed to have been laid under an absolute necessity by another in any way whatsoever.

Should any criminal, in the present age, offer such a defence, it would be rejected. He would be told, that since no visible power had forced him to be wicked, his plea in laying the blame on invisible powers and motives, could not be admitted, but that he must suffer for his crimes. And this is reasonable, since the doctrine of liberty is commonly established. But if the doctrine of an absolute incontrollable necessity, whether it had been called physical or moral; had been universally established from the beginning, every one would have seen the reasonableness of such a defence, and the impropriety of all legal punishments.

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The same method of reasoning is just, and the same consequence is unavoidable, with respect to all divine punishments; at least, if they are not considered as natural consequences of vice, but inflicted juridically as solemn sentences past by a divine tribunal.

If with the gentlemen who are so zealous for an absolute necessity, we extend this doctrine to the Divinity, and maintain that God himself is not possessed of liberty, and could have done nothing but what he has done; it will be difficult, according to the defenders of liberty, to see upon what foundation we should offer him our solemn praises and prayers, or pay him that regard, which certainly is, and has been acknowledged to be due to him in all ages and nations.

It will indeed be allowed, if an intelligent being, who is from none, but exists and acts from a necessity in his own nature, is supposed to be necessarily and essentially good, and to produce nothing but because he sees it to be good and beneficial;

ficial; that such a being is amiable, and that the constitutions of his nature is perfect. If we believe that the universe is the workmanship of such an excellent nature, such a belief is highly comfortable. An inward sense, and an external acknowledgment of so much goodness, may be called natural and just. In truth, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to stifle all inward gratitude or external adoration. The sense we feel of benefits received from such an amiable being, is different from the sense which we have of those advantages which we derive from common mechanism. We do not praise a machine for its skilful contrivance, or the beneficial purposes which it is made to answer. We admire the workmanship, but we praise only the artist who contrived it. We do not reckon ourselves indebted to the sun, which warms us, or to the rains which water the earth. We offer up our thanksgivings to that bountiful author of nature, who hath formed these instruments of his goodness on purpose to make us happy. So far, it may be confessed, that praises and adorations

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rations are due to a benevolent being, though he does not act freely, but from necessity. At the same time, it may be questioned, whether it would have been possible for us ever to have felt any sentiments of gratitude in any case, had we never had any sentiments of liberty. As those who have felt the blessings of a free government, must ever retain sentiments different from those who know nothing but absolute despotic monarchy; those feelings of gratitude, first raised and nursed up under the sense that we were born under the auspicious sceptre of liberty, will obstinately remain with us to the end of our lives; though by metaphysical arguments, we may be brought to alter our opinions, and may be deluded to fancy that we are under subjection to an absolute necessity. So difficult will it be found, to banish altogether, by the strongest metaphysical arguments, the original and congenial sentiments of human nature.

But whatever may be thought of offering up our praises to God, upon the supposition of an absolute necessity in his

his nature; the patrons of liberty will contend, that prayers are upon a very different footing, and will on such a system be found liable to insuperable objections.

According to the common sentiments of mankind, prayer supposes a certain contingency in the affairs of the world, and that all events are not adjusted and fixed according to an absolute incontrollable necessity. If we know that a man hath taken his resolution, and that he is absolutely determined not to alter it, we neither trouble him nor ourselves with any further solicitations. And tho' prayers offered up to an infinitely perfect being, must be considered in a different light from that of requests to men, and must be supposed to be presented with different views and intentions. Yet neither do we pray to God concerning any thing which we suppose to be absolutely fixed. We may admire the steadiness and regularity of the motions and revolutions of the sun and moon, and the regular processes that are carried on in animal and vegetable bodies on the earth. 'Tis natural for us to wish

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that such a beautiful and beneficent order may be preserved. But we do not pray that the sun or the moon may rise or go down, at any other than the common and stated hour. Protestants do not pray for the dead, because they consider their state as unalterable. The first men who poured out their hearts in solemn prayers to God, did not believe the doctrine of an absolute necessity. Had such a doctrine been universally believed from the beginning, prayers had never been universally established as proper and useful. It was long after such an establishment, that those philosophers rose up who invented the scheme of necessity. On their first appearance, they would doubtless endeavour to reconcile their doctrine to the established system, and common forms of religion. In fact, they have offered many specious arguments for this purpose, but they will never be able to convince the bulk of mankind, that these two systems are compatible.

In vain will they pretend that prayers are the most proper acknowledgments of
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our dependance upon God, and of the homage which is due to him from his creatures. This homage may be acknowledged by many other methods, without the absurdity of praying to him for things which are supposed to be unchangeably determined and fixed.

In vain do they plead, that prayers are a most excellent means of cherishing pious and good thoughts. These thoughts may be well cherished by other methods, without running into so visible an absurdity as praying upon the supposition of an absolute necessity.

In vain will they tell us, that our prayers are one link in the chain, and come in among the other motives by which the Deity is absolutely determined. For the question is shortly this, whether, upon the supposition of an absolute necessity, by which all things whatsoever are unalterably fixed, without any liberty or contingency, it is not as absurd a form to offer up our solemn prayers in any case, as it would be at present to pray that the sun might

not rise at the stated hour, or for any other thing which is supposed to be determined with an equal certainty.

Thus, according to the patrons of liberty, the doctrine of an absolute necessity appears unfriendly to the establishment of government and religion: and as it is a necessary consequence of this system, that our condition depends wholly on another, and not at all upon ourselves; such a doctrine raises infinite scruples in our minds, and causes a dreadful and remediless anxiety concerning our future, or our eternal fate. In short, it reverses the whole system of human affairs.

This is so evident to the acute author of the "Essays on the principles of morality and natural religion," that he acknowledges, that it is necessary "that man should have some sense of things possible and contingent, things depending upon himself to cause, that he may be led to a proper exercise of that activity for which he was designed. And that as a sense of necessity, would be a
" per-

" perpetual contradiction to the sense of
 " contingency, it was well ordered, that
 " his being a necessary agent should be
 " hid from him. To have seen himself
 " (says he) * a part of that great machine
 " of the world, winded up and set a go-
 " ing by the author of his nature, would
 " have been inconsistent with the part that
 " is allotted him to act. Then indeed
 " the "ignava ratio," the inactive doc-
 " trine of the Stoics would have followed.
 " Conceiving nothing to be contingent, or
 " depending upon himself to cause, there
 " would have been no room for fore-
 " thought about futurity, nor for any
 " sort of industry and care. He would
 " have had no motives to action, but im-
 " mediate sensations of pleasure and pain.
 " He must have been formed like the
 " brutes, who have no other principle of
 " action, but mere instinct. The few in-
 " stincts he is at present endued with,
 " would have been altogether insufficient.
 " He must have had an instinct to sow,
 " another to reap. He must have had

* 2d Edit. p. 155.

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“instincts to pursue every conveniency,
“and perform every office in life. In
“short, reason and thought, could not
“have been exercised in the way they are;
“that is, man could not have been man,
“had he not been furnished with a sense
“of contingency, and been kept in igno-
“rance of his being a necessary agent.”

Thus, this ingenious author candidly confesses, that his favourite scheme of necessity is contrary to the natural and simple feelings and sentiments of mankind; and that it was absolutely necessary for them to have been endued with the feelings of liberty and contingency. In this case, it had been better for him to have abandoned what he calls philosophic truth, and to have confessed, that these feelings were not delusive, but real, since they are so strong, that however much the philosopher may be convinced of the settled necessary train of causes and effects, which leaves nothing, properly speaking, in his power; yet the moment he comes out into the world, he acts as a free agent. If this is the case, this is another proof,
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besides what has been given already from philosophers being sensible of their guilt, that there can be no demonstration of the scheme of necessity; for if any one saw a demonstration that he acted in consequence of an incontrollable necessity, and was not free, he could neither believe that he was a free agent, nor act as such. For no man can believe against a demonstration. What therefore he calls a demonstration, cannot be real, but delusive.

If we attend more carefully to this demonstration, it will appear to be altogether inconclusive. It amounts to nothing but this, "We incline to what we incline, and
 " as we incline, and we do not incline to
 " what we do not incline; nay, we cannot incline at any time, to what at the
 " same time we cannot incline." This is true. But where is the demonstration that
 " we cannot incline at any time, to
 " what we do not incline at that time." The truth is, whence we incline or desire, or are averse, or will; or what determines, strikes, moves, or influences us to make choice of one of the different or contrary

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things which are in our view, is far from being so clear as to become the subject of a demonstration. Why may there not be a play of words on the other side? “ Because these ideas, perceptions, or objects which are presented to mankind, have not any force or activity, but are considered as wholly inert; they cannot have any power to excite, or determine to any thing. Mankind determine themselves as they chuse, and they chuse of themselves, and prefer one thing, or what is quite contrary, according to their nature, temper, general character, or their disposition at a particular time. Besides that original nature which is not from themselves, besides the impressions from company and education, there is something from themselves, something which they give themselves, which they have not from any other being, and which does not proceed from any objects or circumstances whatsoever. These objects, which in appearance are entirely the same, presented to different men, or to the same
“ man

“ man at different times, in the same cir-
 “ cumstances, in as far as any man can
 “ discern the choice to be interested, do
 “ not affect or move them equally. It is
 “ not therefore the idea, or the object,
 “ which determines mankind in their ac-
 “ tions, but they determine themselves from
 “ an inward principle of activity.” Thus
 men may argue, and darken counsel by
 words, but in truth 'tis all sophistry on
 both sides, and we do not sufficiently know
 how spirits are determined, or determine
 themselves, and what they really are.

In the mean time, without any so-
 phistry, the patrons of liberty think them-
 selves certain, that men are indued by na-
 ture with various appetites, passions, in-
 clinations, and aversions for various ob-
 jects; that they are also formed to acknow-
 ledge and approve inwardly, the nature,
 worth, and excellence of virtue, and to
 perceive the advantages which flow from
 it. This sense cannot be totally defaced
 by the greatest negligence, by the worst
 education, and by the most vicious habits.
 The worst of men cannot eradicate these
 na-

natural impressions, or wholly destroy a regard to virtue in the mind. All who can or do compare things together, must perceive this essential and eternal difference in things. However much sensual pleasure, grandeur, riches, dominion, and fame, may be desired or pursued, the pursuits of them can never be equally approved with the pursuit of virtue. Yet men often prefer the pursuits of pleasure and ambition. This they do of themselves, they are not under any force or necessity of any kind. They might do otherwise, and other men who have a more perfect knowledge of pleasure, and ambition, prefer virtue. But though vicious men voluntarily prefer vicious pleasure, or chuse to gratify an enormous ambition; yet they never can give this unjust preference, without a sensible reluctance and inward condemnation. They know they are doing wrong, but choose to gratify a present appetite. This inward and immediate acknowledgment is a more powerful argument of guilt, and consequently of liberty, than all that can be brought on the other side. During this inward chagrin
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felt by the guilty man, he does not consider himself as having been in such an unlucky situation, that objects were presented to him with an irresistible force. He does not look upon himself as unfortunate only, but as guilty, in being wanting to himself, and neglecting to do what he might have done, or in doing what he knows well he could have omitted. The keenest assertors of the doctrine of necessity are conscious of this, as much as others. When they say they believe an absolute necessity, it may justly be said that this is impossible, or that they cannot believe it. If they could, they would get clear of all notions of guilt. But this is impossible for them; their hearts condemn them, and they know and feel that they are guilty.

Thus, according to the defenders of human liberty, as something depends on men themselves, there is a certain distinction between the works of God, and the works of men; and if this is once established as a principle, it will not be found a vain speculation; since it may justly be
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inferred from it, that the author of nature is not responsible for those calamities which do not arise from the frame of nature, but from the perverseness and folly of those creatures who have abused that liberty with which they have been endued.

PROS.



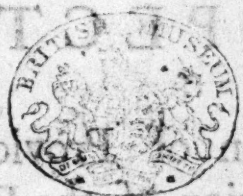
PROSPECT IX.

A Vindication of Providence, on
the supposition of the Freedom of
rational Beings.



THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF
JAMES OGLETHORPE
BY
JOHN STURGES
OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW-YORK
PUBLISHED BY
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
PHILADELPHIA
1854

PROSPECT IX.



A
the
National
Beings.

PROSPECT IX.

AMONG the advantages which have been imagined to attend that system which supports the liberty of rational creatures, in opposition to an absolute and incontrollable necessity, it has been reckoned none of the least, that while the patrons of necessity leave the Deity equally accountable for all evils whatsoever, that have happened in the world, whether they arise from the frame of nature, or from the vices of men; their adversaries have established a doctrine, according to which mankind alone are accountable for all those calamities which flow from vice and folly. In this manner, the defenders of liberty, imagine they free themselves at once from what is most difficult in accounting for evil, and are only bound, in common with their antagonists, to answer
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those objections which are drawn from the apparent defects and blemishes in the works of nature : it will be proper to attend to their reasonings on this head, and observe in what manner they attempt to vindicate the divine government.

Nothing is more evident, than that mankind have not had any share in contriving or producing any of the heavenly bodies, or in disposing them in the order in which they are arranged. They have not formed the clouds, or the atmosphere. They have formed none of the materials which make up the substance, or lie upon the surface of the earth. They have not reduced the earth to a spherical form, nor have they any hand in creating any of the systems of vegetables, or any of the tribes of animals, or in endowing animals with their various senses, instincts, or powers of perception or action, or in contriving and forming the rational faculties and powers of their own species. None of all these productions can be reckoned among the works of men. They are, and they are

are commonly called the works of nature, or the productions of the Great Creator.

Neither can it be denied by any, that these works of nature are great, beautiful and useful. They are formed with the highest art, and are adapted to the most excellent purposes. There is a striking grandeur in the heavenly bodies. The sun is vastly large. The primary planets revolving around him, and the secondary planets going round their primaries, are all bodies of a vast bulk. It is evident that they have not been placed at random. Their distances from the sun, and from one another, are determined according to weight and measure. There is a wonderful simplicity in the laws by which they are upheld and moved. Their motions, their revolutions and periods, are regular and steady; and have been constant and uniform during a long course of ages, even as far back as history can carry us; and though all of them are not, yet many of them are well known, and subjected to calculation. To a vulgar eye, at first sight, they appear great and glorious. But the

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vulgar could never have formed just conceptions of their grandeur. It is the astronomer alone, who understands their real greatness, while he conceives them as systems of worlds beyond worlds throughout the immensity of space; and supposes them to contain many convenient and goodly habitations, for various tribes of animal and rational creatures. This amazing thought fills and astonishes the contemplative mind, and raises the highest admiration of the wisdom and power of that exalted nature, which is the source of all these magnificent works.

Again, the earth is of a prodigious bulk, placed at a proper distance from the sun. If it had been situated much nearer, it had been too much scorched: if at a greater distance, it had been frozen with cold, and had become unfit for the support of vegetation and animal life. By its diurnal rotation, and by the inclination of its axis to the plane of the ecliptic, all its parts in common, are gradually illuminated, and warmed in a manner most beneficial for the whole.

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The clouds and air with which it is surrounded, serve, by an admirable mechanism, to preserve and cherish animal and vegetable life.

The earth contains in its bowels a great variety of rich materials, which may be applied to excellent uses, as the art of man hath evidently proved.

Upon its surface, it nourishes an infinite number of vegetables of admirable beauty, framed with a wonderful skill, and fitted for the most beneficial purposes. It supports with wholesome and delicious food, an infinite number of animals, which are of the most exquisite contexture, and are endued with many useful instincts, and various powers of sense, perception, and action. It is, especially, fitted to be an agreeable and convenient habitation for men, who are the chief of the works of God within our view; and who are not only well provided with appetites, affections, and passions adjusted to answer the most beneficial ends, but are also endued with excellent rational faculties and

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powers,

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powers, which show them to be of an order far superior to all other animals on the earth.

Thus the works of the Great Creator are glorious and magnificent, and in the frame of the heavens and the earth, ample provision is made for the pleasure and happiness of innumerable orders of animal and rational natures.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that not only to a careless observer, but to the most accurate inspector, many things in the order of nature, may at first view appear hurtful, and rather excite the idea of inattention, or ill will, than of wisdom or beneficence.

Thus many will be apt to complain, that too much of the surface of our globe is covered with water: that the regions under the equator are too much heated: that animals about the pole, are exposed to too much cold: that the more temperate climates, are often rendered uncomfortable by thunders, lightnings, and furious

rious winds; by noxious and pestilential fogs and vapours; by excessive rains and colds; at some seasons by scorching droughts and heats; at others, by earthquakes, eruptions of subterraneous fires and waters, and by inundations of the seas and rivers, which cannot be prevented by the skill or power of men. These often reduce the animal tribes to great distress, destroy the fruits of the earth, and the labours of men. Thus it will be said, that good and evil are mixed, and that as many things are beneficial, some things are no less hurtful in the frame of nature itself.

If we would be truly impartial, we must confess that this is the case. The present frame of this earth, is not wholly adapted to render its inhabitants perfectly happy, without any mixture of distress; and before we can fully vindicate the works of nature, from the imputation of imperfection, it will be necessary to shew, that a perfect felicity is by no means suitable to the present constitution and condition of the inhabitants of this earth.

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According to our present hypothesis, mankind are endued with liberty. Their Creator hath made them free agents, given them a choice, and left them masters of their own conduct. It will not be denied, that they have often abused, and daily abuse their liberty. Mankind are not in a state of pure innocence, but of vice and depravity. As such, they must be acknowledged to be guilty. Being guilty, they cannot put in any claim to be exempted from all punishments whatsoever, from the great Lord and Governor of the world. This will be confessed even by those moralists and philosophers, who have the least rigid notions of the demerit of vice.

This being the case, we have no reason to complain that the frame of this earth, which is designed to be a habitation for such creatures, is not wholly adapted to a state of pure innocence. As it is proper there should be a distinction made between virtue and vice; so a corrupted, or depraved, must not be on an equal footing with an innocent world. No wonder there-

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therefore, that the great Creator and Governor has adjusted the frame of nature in such a manner, that by the disposition of the air and clouds, and by the contexture of various bodies on the surface, or within the bosom of the earth, he can chastise and punish the vices of rational creatures, and give check to their follies. So far, it must be granted that there are, and so far it is proper that there should be, evils which arise from the order of nature itself.

As mankind are the principal inhabitants of this earth, it may reasonably be expected that the structure and appendages of the globe, should chiefly be suited to the circumstances of men. Had mankind never acted unreasonably and viciously, it would have been more difficult to account for some things which are visible in the frame of nature.

But when we consider, that in place of being innocent, all men have abused their liberty, and rendered themselves criminal; when we remember that this must have

been foreseen by the Deity, at least (even according to the lowest idea of his perfection) that it could not but be perceived as soon as it happened; we may better account for some things which are hurtful in the structure of the earth.

For since vice has so greatly prevailed in the world, why should not the wise Creator have had a view to this, either in the original frame of the earth, or in some of those changes which it may have undergone? Can it reasonably be expected that a corrupted and depraved race of creatures, should have as agreeable an habitation, as those who are wise and innocent. Thus the objections of sceptical philosophers, may in general be repelled.

At the same time, all that can be blamed in the frame of nature, or structure of the earth, even according to their own computations, is truly inconsiderable. The heavens declare the glory of God. The earth is full of the riches of the Lord. God hath never left himself without a witness. The mercies of the Lord are great,
and

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and his tender mercies are over all his other works. Those evils which are complained of, and which give occasion to the objections of scepticks, compared with the benefits of nature, are truly so small, and small as they are, may be so much corrected and prevented by industry and virtue; that upon a due comparison, they evanish, and may as justly be neglected in our calculations, as we neglect the inequalities on the surface of the earth, in our demonstration of its globular form. This will become more evident, by a few observations on those parts of nature, which either the mere vulgar, or the philosophers, have been apt to represent as blemishes.

1. Though we abstract from all moral government of the natural world, scarce can we be presumed to know so much of the constitution of the globe, and of the circumambient air, as to be able to pronounce with certainty, that a smaller surface of water, a less quantity of thunder, lightning and wind; fewer, and less pestilential

lential fogs, and vapours; more moderate rains, colds and heats; fewer, and less violent earthquakes, and eruptions of subterraneous fires and waters; less impetuous inundations of the seas or rivers, and a different inclination of the axis of the earth to the ecliptic, would have been sufficient to answer all the salutary ends in the natural world, for which these constitutions were intended. The same observation will be found just, with respect to many other parts of nature, which by a careless spectator, may be accounted blemishes. Though by the help of reason and experience, we are able to see many pregnant proofs of wisdom and goodness in the frame of nature, from which we most justly conclude, that good is greatly predominant; yet the relations and uses of many of its parts, and the ends of the great Creator in many of its operations, are not fully understood. In general, our knowledge of these operations, is so imperfect, that in none of them can it be said, without the height of rashness, that nature has erred. Such knowledge
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(undoubtedly) is too wonderful for us; it is too high, we cannot attain unto it *.

Numbers of examples may be brought, of the errors of philosophers in subjects of this intricate nature. But what happened to the pious and learned author of the "Sacred theory of the earth †," seems most directly to our purpose. From what philosopher could more have been expected? This worthy gentleman had united the character of the philosopher to that of the divine. He had carefully examined both nature and sacred writ, with an uncommon freedom; he ransacked the stores of ancient learning: yet all this could not prevent him from falling into palpable mistakes concerning the present structure of our globe; and from fancying, without reason, that he had found out many defects in its present constitution.

In this light, did he consider the misshapen rocks and mountains, the irregular

* Psalm cxxxix. 6.

† The celebrated Dr. Thomas Burnet.

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courses of the rivers, the large extent of the surface of the seas, the change of seasons, and the inequality of the days and nights, occasioned by the oblique inclination of the axis of the earth to the ecliptic. Imagining these to be blemishes, he conceived that the earth could not have been framed originally by God, in its present form. He discarded both the scorching heats of summer, and chilling colds of winter, as pernicious; and with the poets, imagined a perpetual spring. He represented a smooth and regular surface, stretching every way over the whole earth, without any seas, or any inequalities whatsoever, to form the most beautiful and convenient figure. This he fancied to have been the original and paradisaical form: but that the primitive earth, perishing at the deluge, out of this mighty mass of waters, emerged the present earth like a wreck, with the obliquity of its axis to the ecliptic, and with all the irregularities and inequalities of its misshapen surface. All this he set off in a most ingenious manner, and with such appearances of reason, as might seem plausible, even
to

to readers who could not be called inattentive.

But his beautiful theory is nothing but an agreeable romance; the present form and structure of the earth is preferable in all respects, to what this ingenious author imagined to have been the original and paradisaical. This is made abundantly evident by Dr. Keil, (though somewhat too roughly) in his examination of this theory *.

This celebrated mathematician has clearly proved, that the inequalities on the surface of the earth, arising from the vast ranges of the mountains; that the

* Dr. Burnet's intentions were pious and generous, his system was ingenious, his book was written in an animated and eloquent stile, his descriptions of nature were sublime; his opinions were illustrated by many entertaining quotations from antiquity. Yet all this was not sufficient to prevent bitter censures. Even Dr. Keil himself, in his examination, treats him with too much severity, and assumes an air of too great superiority; neither showing the moderation of a philosopher accustomed to indulge himself and others in uncommon speculations, nor that mercy and gentleness, which are so graceful when one has a good cause, and is far superior to his antagonist in the knowledge of his subject.

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largeness of the surface of the seas; that the obliquity of the axis of the earth, to the plane of the ecliptic, are mighty advantages to mankind; that what Dr. Burnet calls a paradisaical state of the globe, would have been extremely uncomfortable, and must have rendered the greatest part of the earth barren: that the large surface of the sea, and the huge tracts of the mountains, are necessary for forming the rivers, and producing a sufficient quantity of rain; and that if the axis of the earth were perpendicular to the plane of the ecliptic, we could not have those proper degrees of heat and cold which are necessary to raise up vegetables, and to bring them to perfection; and particularly, that all those tracts of the earth which lie within 45 degrees of latitude, would have more heat than they have at present, which would be hurtful, instead of being an advantage; while all the tracts beyond 45 degrees of latitude, would have been deprived of several degrees of heat which they enjoy at present. All this is finely illustrated by that acute mathematician. So different are the conjectures,
even

even of the most ingenious men, from the real truth of things, when by a proper method we are able to unfold the wise designs of nature.

Many other excellent observations concerning the various uses of many constitutions in nature, have been made by natural philosophers within the last hundred years; particularly by the great Sir Isaac Newton and his contemporaries. The more nature has been studied and understood, its structure has been found more beautiful and useful. They who have pretended to find faults and discover blemishes, have been as unlucky as Dr. Burnet, who fancied those to be blemishes, which are found to be beauties; or as Alphonso King of Castile, who found out, indeed, a real defect in that system of astronomy, which was believed to be the true one in the age in which he lived; but which since that time has happily been discovered to be false, and has yielded its place to the true system, which would have entirely satisfied that philosophical Prince, who appears to have had clearer

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views of astronomy than most of his contemporaries.

To this first observation, another may be added.

2. If mankind are endued with liberty, and are left masters of their own conduct, the frame of nature, and that world in which they are to act, must not be governed by particular wills of the Creator, ever varying, as they may produce good in particular cases, without a visible steadiness and regularity: but the world adapted to such rational creatures, must be governed by general laws, which must rarely be interrupted by miraculous or preternatural interpositions of the first mover. Without such general laws, these rational creatures could not act with wisdom, or rather could not know how to act at all. This being the case, it is evident, that if rational creatures act unreasonably, and do not make a proper use of such general laws, these laws must often necessarily produce evil in particular cases, be they ever

so good and wise, and ever so properly adjusted upon the whole.

3. How inconsiderable are the damages which either the rational or mere animal kinds sustain from inundations of water, excessive heats and colds, thunders, lightnings, stormy winds, unwholesome vapours, immoderate rains; and in general, from the inclemency of the air; compared with the mighty benefits which arise to them from seas, rivers, refreshing rains, gentler winds, the coolness of the air, and the kind influences of the sun.

4. How many even of these smaller inconveniencies might be prevented by the industry, prudence, and virtue of mankind! Did all men use their reason properly, were they perfectly wise, innocent, and good; did they live in perfect friendship, as they ought to do, did they regulate commerce every where according to the exact rules of justice and benevolence, how little would they suffer from the

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frame of nature, compared with what they suffer at present, through vice and folly! In such happy circumstances, a thousand methods would be found out, to prevent or to remedy the inconveniencies arising from the inclemency of the air, or from the barrenness of the earth. The combined forces of mankind would, in many cases, set bounds to the inundations of the rivers, nay to the raging of the sea. Voyages would not be undertaken with so many disadvantages, or at such dangerous and unseasonable times, as at present. Mariners would find an asylum, and all kinds of refreshments every where, as if they were at home, and mankind in general would feel but a few inconsiderable evils from the course of nature.

Thus the beauty and beneficence that shine forth in the structure of the heavens and of the earth, so far exceed whatever can be called of a contrary kind, that it is reasonable for us to submit to a wisdom so visibly superior to our own, and to conclude firmly, that sovereign goodness

ness and wisdom govern in the frame of nature.

As to the particular distresses of animals arising from the texture of their bodies, it cannot be denied that animals are exposed to many pains during their short and uncertain lives; and that all animal bodies must at length be dissolved. Diseases and pains seem to be interwoven with their original contexture. The causes of them perhaps lye deep, and lurk for many years, but at last they break forth with violence, and either destroy life altogether, or greatly impair the vigour of the constitution. Seldom do animal bodies arrive at their greatest maturity, without feeling attacks from these secret diseases. Maladies cannot always be traced from mismanagement, want of care, or external accidents; but seem to depend on the original frame, and to flow from the fountain of our blood. Having once reached maturity, we gradually decay, we become feeble, languid and decrepit. These are preparations for death, which seizes us at last according to an immutable law. Death.

appears every where, and causes universal havock among all the tribes of animals *. It is not merely an effect of the vices of men in any particular age or country, but arises necessarily from the present constitution of nature.

We need not wonder that these unavoidable pains, and the continual destruction of animals, have greatly perplexed wise and contemplative men in all ages of the world. Nor is it perhaps given to the sons of men fully to explain this mysterious part of nature. To answer this objection to the entire satisfaction of the inquisitive and sceptical mind, requires perhaps a deeper insight into nature, than men are capable of in their present state. Many things, however, may be observed to quiet our fears, and to show us that these pains which are unavoidable, and this universal empire of death, flow neither from malice, nor from inattention in the supreme and universal Governor.

* See Prospect VI. pag. 169, 170.

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It has been already proved, that mankind feel much more pleasure than pain, from the constitution of their nature*. It has been made evident, that notwithstanding their vices, their enjoyments are far superior to their sufferings; and that with all their sorrows, their condition is truly eligible. If this is the case with mankind, notwithstanding all their vices, which produce so many of their calamities; much more may we conclude it is the condition of other animals, which do not depart from the law of their nature, and escape the bad consequences of disorder.

Add to this, that from the prolific virtue of animals in a limited extent of the earth, the empire of death becomes absolutely necessary, and multitudes of animals must daily be destroyed, that multitudes may have room daily to enter into life.

Besides, by such a constitution, there is room for much more animal life than

* See Prospect VII.

could otherwise find place in nature. If multitudes of animals appear contemptible in our eyes; if they are so small and helpless, that they must unavoidably be crushed to death every moment; yet by these seemingly contemptible tribes of living creatures, nature is rendered more full, and proper inhabitants are found out for all her vacant interstices. If the lives of so many animals are extremely short, others are raised up in so much quicker a succession. Nature speedily repairs the loss. "The vital principle is widely
 "shared, and infinitely varied: dispersed
 "throughout; no where extinct. All
 "lives; and by succession still revives.
 "The temporary beings quit their borrowed forms, and yield their elementary substance to new comers. Called,
 "in their several turns, to life, they view
 "the light, and viewing pass, that others
 "too may be spectators of the goodly
 "scene, and greater numbers still enjoy
 "the privilege of nature. Munificent
 "and great, she imparts herself to most;
 "and

"and makes the subjects of her bounty
"infinite." *

Thus, death is not an arbitrary, but an unavoidable constitution in nature. The prolifick virtue of animals, which is the foundation of many enjoyments, renders death necessary in a limited extent of the earth. In this case, it is reasonable for us to leave the period, the manner, the preparations, and the whole contrivance by which animals are cut off, to the superior wisdom of providence. It may justly be deemed arrogance in such imperfect creatures, to imagine they could have contrived the process with greater advantage. Many circumstances which prepare for death, or which attend or follow it, appear far more dismal and shocking than they really are †. The brute animals, incapable of that foresight and anxiety which often makes death appear shocking to mankind, die with much less trouble.

* The Earl of Shaftsbury's Rhapsody, Part III. Section I.

† *Pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa.*

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If mankind feel more bitterness in death, their vices and false opinions are the only causes, and nature is not to be blamed.

No doubt, men might be removed from the earth by a very different process; without the decays, diseases, pains, or accidents, which are at present the causes or attendants of death. They might either be annihilated, or translated without pain or anxiety, into some other region in nature. And, in the opinion of divines, after having resided for some time in their terrestrial habitation, men would have actually been translated into a heavenly mansion without pain or trouble, if the earth had been intended to be preserved for ever, and if vice had not been introduced into the world. But such a calm and easy translation, supposes a quite different constitution of things. The question is not what would have been proper in such a constitution, or what is suitable to a state of innocence, but what is suitable to the constitution of things at present; when through the abuse of liberty, vice prevails so much in the world. In such a
state,

state, it is certainly more natural to suffer men's vices and irregular passions, in which they indulge themselves so freely, timeously to put an end to their lives, and thus prevent the earth's being overstocked, than at the expence of miracles to prevent the natural consequences of their vices, and preserve their lives for a little time longer; when at any rate it would be necessary, at last, either to annihilate them, or to convey them miraculously into some other region, that room may be made for others to enter into life.

Thus it appears evident, that the death of animals is highly suitable to the other great determinations in nature, of a limited fertility, and limited extent of the earth, and of a regular propagation of mankind. If this once be admitted, it will help us to account for that neglect and prodigious havock of animal life, which are so visible through every part of nature. If death is allowed to be proper in any case (as most undoubtedly must be granted) it will be proper in every

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every case, where it is necessary to answer the same good purposes, and providence must be fully as watchful to kill and to destroy, as to raise up, and to preserve mankind and the rest of the animals.

But, in truth, it is not by death, nor by the pains of the body, which arise from the constitution of nature, that mankind can justly be said to become unhappy. This constitution must indeed expose them to some inconveniencies; but the evils which infest human life, and which alone give any just handle to represent it as miserable, come wholly from another quarter. They are derived from those moral disorders which can no way be imputed to our Creator; but flow wholly from the abuse of that liberty, which is one of the noblest gifts of heaven. Compared with the evils we bring on ourselves by the abuse of our reason, all other evils vanish. Not the thousandth part of our distresses, flow from any other source than vice and wickedness. How great and numerous blessings might mankind have enjoyed according to the course of nature, had

had they always acted virtuously and wisely? Of this, we may form some faint conjectures from the blessings which they have actually procured, notwithstanding all their errors and vices. Even by a very imperfect use of their reason and liberty, they have cultivated and adorned this globe, built houses, erected cities, united themselves in families, formed themselves into societies, framed laws, founded government, modelled religion, divided the earth into nations, established commerce, made many discoveries in science, invented numerous arts, contrived many useful and curious instruments and machines, and wonderfully polished and improved their natural genius and understanding. Had they behaved better, they might have made much greater improvements, become far more happy, rendered this earth a much more convenient and agreeable habitation, and either have prevented or remedied so many of the evils which they have felt, that the few remaining would only have served to give a higher relish of the blessings and advantages of life.

We

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We ought not, therefore, to complain that the order of nature is not fair and beautiful. It is not of the bountiful Creator, but of our selves only we have reason to complain. It is vice alone, which has darkened the beauty of the works of nature, and raised unjust suspicions of the goodness of providence. But our vices are not the work of God. They are wholly derived from our abuse of liberty. Hence jealousies, suspicions, calumnies, malice, envy, revenge, anger, rage, rashness, inattention, fraud, injustice, cruelty, tyranny, oppression; by all which the inward tranquility of our minds, and the external peace and order of the world, are greatly disturbed. It is from these odious vices alone, and not from any penury of provisions, that such multitudes of the human race enjoy so few of the comforts of life, and are exposed to hunger, cold, poverty, contempt, and excessive labour. From the abuse of our liberty, flows intemperance, debauchery, luxury; by which the human body is rendered sickly and infirm; human life is greatly shortened, and death becomes both

both more frequent and more painful. How many evils flow from pride, enormous ambition, a superstitious and an enthusiastic zeal? Hence cruel wars, the rage and madness of conquerors, enmity on account of different opinions in religion, barbarous persecutions for conscience sake, by which the world has been so deeply distressed, and mankind have been excited to fury in destroying one another. It is not to the God of nature, but to ourselves alone, we ought to impute those black and horrid conspiracies, treasons, assassinations, murders, and all those unnatural crimes, by which mankind have rendered themselves so vile and despicable. Though we are born weak and ignorant, and in our infancy are exposed to many sad accidents by the neglects of others; yet as some of the highest endearments, and of the sweetest and kindest affections of human nature, are founded upon our early weaknesses and necessities; so our kind Creator hath made abundant provision for preserving us safe, and for training us to wisdom and virtue, in the tender affection of parents. This affection

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is deeply implanted by nature, and therefore most justly called natural affection. In itself, it is made sufficiently strong for the purpose for which it is intended. It is through vice alone, that we struggle against it, or are able to overcome it. It is nothing but vice, which in any case defeats that pity which so powerfully excites us to relieve the distressed; nor, can it be stifled without violent struggles against nature. Nature ought not to be blamed when mankind imbitter the lives of the inferior animals by cruelty and severe labour, or when they hasten their death by wantonness and folly. None of all these things ought to be numbered among the works of God, but are wholly to be imputed to men, and flow from the abuse of their liberty.

Thus the assertors of human liberty reckon they have a manifest advantage, as their system, by allowing mankind to act freely, leaves room for the distinction between the works of God and men, and gives an easy solution of the question concerning the origin of evil, under the government

vernment of a being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness.

Besides, they look upon it as a further advantage, that their system is more simple, and much more easily conceived. According to the appearances in nature, many things are loose and detached from one another. 'Tis not easy to discern that strict and necessary connection, by which all things are linked together according to the metaphysical doctors. The supposition, that all the vices and calamities of human life, are nothing else but the necessary preparations for the enjoyment of a greater good, or subtile inventions to produce a higher degree of happiness, is not a little mysterious, and is attended with considerable difficulties. This, however, must be the system of the religious sort of those philosophers, who deny the liberty of rational beings. There is, say they, a being possessed of infinite perfection; he has adjusted the whole system, and has connected all things together. This system is the wisest, the most excellent, the most

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most glorious, that can possibly be produced. There is not any real, but only apparent evil; there is nothing which will not contribute to a greater good. But according to the patrons of liberty, this seems only to be an hypothesis unsupported by any evidence from the connections, and contrary to the appearances in nature. It appears to have been invented merely to answer objections, and seems the offspring of an over subtile philosophy. The jarring and contradictory actions of mankind, do not seem to flow from the contrivance of one being only: the method of producing the greatest possible good by means of so much vice and misery, seems too tedious and too operose. Had an infinitely perfect being equally adjusted all the parts, and made no allowances for liberty in rational creatures, 'tis presumable he would have come to his end by shorter and more direct methods. The main lines, the grand and original constitutions, are from the author of nature, and they are good. But he is not accountable for those vices and calamities which

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which flow from the abuse of that liberty, with which, as being in its own nature most excellent, and absolutely necessary for the most illustrious purposes, he hath been pleased to endue his rational creatures.

X

PROS.

A Vindication of Provender No. 202

which flows from the abundance of that party, with which, as being in its own nature most excellent, and absolutely necessary for the most illustrious purposes, he hath been pleased to grant the usual ceremony.

It is not only a great honour to be admitted into the society of those who are distinguished by the name of Provender, but it is also a great advantage to be able to converse with them, and to be able to converse with them in a manner which is both agreeable and profitable. It is not only a great honour to be admitted into the society of those who are distinguished by the name of Provender, but it is also a great advantage to be able to converse with them, and to be able to converse with them in a manner which is both agreeable and profitable.

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PROSPECT X.

A Vindication of Providence, on the
Scheme of Necessity.



X 2. P R O S-



PROSPECT X.

THOUGH nothing seems more evident to the bulk of mankind, than the doctrine which establishes a liberty of the will, and supposes that men are not only masters of their own actions, but of that choice from whence they flow: yet there has been a great party among the philosophers, who have denied this liberty, and maintained that men are under an absolute necessity, being so effectually determined in the whole of their conduct, by a train of motives arising from some foreign influence, that in reality they have not a free choice, and are not able to do any thing, but that which they actually do.

According to these philosophers, every thing in the universe is necessary, and no-

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thing could possibly have happened in any other way than it has done. Bodies are impelled by other bodies, or by spirits, according to fixed laws. Irrational animals are guided by instincts and appetites, with which they are endued by a superior being, and, in strict speech, have no choice; while the choice of rational beings is as effectually determined by the influence of superior motives, which, by a spiritual kind of mechanism, as infallibly and necessarily determine the will, as a greater external force impels a body: nay, God himself is not exempted from this rational necessity; neither is he conceived to have any liberty in acting, though it is allowed that he continually does what is best, according to his eternal and perfect views of wisdom and order.

Other philosophers, and a great number among the vulgar, though they would not be understood to deny the liberty of the mind, yet because they allow that nothing can happen contrary to the decrees of heaven, which they extend to all events whatsoever, and because they do not place
liberty

liberty in acting, or in forbearing to act; or in acting in one, or in a different manner; but in acting spontaneously, or from choice; have, in consequence of this belief, been accused by their adversaries of establishing as absolute a necessity, as if they intirely agreed with the former philosophers.

Others, who are strenuous assertors of the liberty of the will, to determine either in one way or the contrary; and who deny all necessity, either from the force of motives, or from a divine predestination or influence; yet thinking themselves obliged to acknowledge God's universal prescience, or his fore-knowledge of all events whatsoever, precisely as they shall happen, are likewise accused of establishing an absolute necessity of all events, since nothing can happen in any other way than it is foreseen by the divinity.

All these philosophers have acknowledged, that there is a difficulty in accounting for the introduction of evil into a world, under the government of a be-

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ing of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. Even the doctors who only admit the divine prescience; and who maintain, that notwithstanding this prescience, mankind are intirely masters of their actions, and accountable for them; must find it difficult to reconcile the permission of such a deluge of vice and misery, as has overwhelmed the world, to our ideas of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness: for since they acknowledge that God foresees all evils that happen, since they must confess that he permits them, when by his infinite wisdom and power he could have prevented them; their scheme will still be exposed to objections, and by many it will be thought much the same, whether it be said that scenes of distress are predetermined, or that they are foreseen, and not prevented by that omniscient power which could so easily have prevented them. Nay, whether they were foreseen or not; yet, as the beginning of evil, even according to the lowest ideas of the divine perfection, must have been clearly seen as soon as it happened; and, at least, many of the mischievous consequences of it must have been
been

been distinctly understood, and might have been prevented, it may be thought surprizing, that such horrid and such wretched scenes should have been suffered to take place, under the government of a being infinitely perfect.

Let us consider, therefore, what may be offered in answer to these objections, by the supporters of an absolute necessity; both as they are principally concerned to find an answer, and as their answer, if it is good, will be sufficient for all those who admit either the doctrine of predestination, or prescience. Let us enquire what forces can be mustered up in this cause, and by what arguments they attempt to prove, that the infinite number of events which happen in the universe, considered as closely united and connected together, in order to a certain end, proclaim the glory of the infinitely wise and beneficent Creator of the world, notwithstanding all the evils which are mixed in the series.

In examining this question, the principle which has been already established

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ed *, that the pleasures of human life
are much superior to its pains, and that
there is much more happiness than misery
within our view, will be found of con-
siderable advantage, and lays a founda-
tion for very comfortable conclusions con-
cerning the whole system of beings. We
cannot reasonably suppose, that the great
Creator would produce this greater quan-
tity of good, for the sake of obtaining a
smaller quantity of evil. This is truly a
contradiction. If we suppose him mali-
cious, and intending mischief upon the
whole; in order to gain his end, he would
never produce such a superior quantity of
good, as much overbalances the evil. He
would only have introduced such a smal-
ler quantity of good, as by being viewed
or remembered, would serve to imbitter
those more numerous and more bitter ca-
lamities, which were actually felt by his
wretched creatures. In truth, had mis-
chief been primarily and originally intend-
ed, the universe must have been entirely of
a different kind from that goodly system
which is exposed to our view.

* Prospect VII.

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Were we to indulge in reasonings "a priori" it is demonstrable, that a being of infinite knowledge and power, or a being who perceives all things, and all their relations as they are, and who can do what he pleases, can never originally intend evil. According to our most distinct methods of conception, ill will, or malice, can never arise but from partial views. That being who understands every thing perfectly, must see the excellency of universal order, benevolence, beneficence, or goodness; and if he cannot be hindered or restrained from doing what he pleases, he must naturally be inclined to produce nothing but what is agreeable to his conceptions of order and goodness. If we suppose an eternal, independant, and infinitely perfect being, absolutely to dispose of all events, without making any allowances for the liberty of his creatures; so that nothing happens but what he may be said to will, and that his creatures are nothing but what he has made them; we cannot suppose that the evils which have been complained of, could have happened through ignorance or error in the great

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Creator, or that he was disappointed in his designs, or was not able, if he had seen it best, to produce a system in which there was no mixture of evil. Nay, without supposing infinite perfection, and arguing only from the obvious and indisputed appearances of wisdom and power, we must admit, without hesitation, that the wise and powerful former of all things, could have excluded all mixture of evil, and could have raised up a series of creatures intirely different from those which have actually existed, had this been agreeable to his ideas of wisdom and goodness.

It remains, therefore, as the only natural and reasonable hypothesis, that among all the systems which the Creator saw to be possible, he has chosen that which actually exists; and that all the evils which are found in it, have only been allowed for the sake of good, and that they actually contribute to the greater perfection of the universal system of beings.

It

It must indeed be confessed, that the introduction of vice and misery, and their continued prevalence in the world, have, in certain respects, greatly defaced the beauty of nature, and have involved the creatures of God in deep distress. Yet moral and natural evil, considered in another light, have been made subservient to many excellent purposes, and have given occasion to a variety of enjoyments and virtues, which otherwise could never have found a place. Whence, as we conclude from arguments "a posteriori" that it was proper for God to permit both vice and misery, since they actually exist; so if we carefully observe the relations which are in nature, we may perhaps see reason to draw the same conclusion from the inseparable connections of the things themselves, and will find many visible advantages in some kinds of imperfection; nay, some sort of necessity for their existence; in order to lay a foundation for the highest perfection. If this is the case, the objection from the permission of evil is greatly lessened, if it does not wholly vanish. Let us attempt to illustrate such an

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important doctrine, and to vindicate the
scheme of divine providence, even upon the
supposition of an absolute necessity, as has
been done in the last Prospect upon the
supposition of liberty.

In every system or constitution, consist-
ing of several parts, there must be a sub-
ordination among these parts. The high-
est beauty and perfection does not consist
in a constant repetition or continuation of
the same parts, however excellent. There
must needs be a variety; and in proportion
to the greater variety, and greater distance
between the greatest and the least, if due
regard is had to uniformity, and other ne-
cessary circumstances, the art and beauty
are acknowledged to be greater. 'Tis
thus we judge of perfection in a single
vegetable or animal, consisting of a va-
riety of parts fitted for different uses.
The forms of all the parts are not equally
beautiful, nor is the contexture equally
firm; nor are their uses esteemed equal-
ly honourable or important. 'Tis thus
likewise we judge both of the vegeta-
ble and animal systems. Their different
tribes

tribes are formed with various degrees of beauty and perfection. They arise, as in a scale, from the lowest to the highest. Nature delights in variety, as well as in uniformity; it displays its perfections in various magnitudes, figures, colours, scents, tastes, and sounds; in various appetites and passions, in various degrees of reason and understanding, in various ranks, circumstances and conditions of men. All these being skilfully combined, exhibit a more entertaining scene to the spectators, than any one of them repeated or continued.

In like manner, we find mankind obliged to imitate this variety of nature in all their works, whether intended for ornament or use. Magnificence and expence are often improper, and only discover a bad taste. The different parts being designed for different ends, do not admit the same degrees of elegance. Framed according to different models, and more or less adorned, according to their different uses, they better display the Artist's superior skill and just taste in workmanship, than

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than if all the parts were equally costly
or equally adorned.

A house consists of various apartments, prepared and adorned for lower or higher offices; with proportionable degrees of grandeur and elegance, according to their different uses. The same propriety is observed in furniture, apparel, gardens, ornaments of cities, and all other works necessary for human life. In music, there is a necessity for discords, as well as concords, to produce the most ravishing harmony. In painting, what various mixture of light and shade! Paleness, and fainter rays, no less than the brighter, add graces to the picture.

But let us carry our views from sensible objects, and the art employed about them, to that which chiefly relates to the mind, and the passions and characters of mankind. In poetry, the follies and vices of mankind are not only admitted, but are necessary in the composition, to give us the highest entertainment, or best instruction in the kind. Satire cannot subsist, if there are
not

not vices to be described and lashed; nor the comic muse, without follies and indecencies, the subjects of its ridicule and correction. In the more sublime and heroic poems, the true artist represents a variety of characters, with different passions and inclinations, and with different degrees of knowledge, virtue and vice. None of the inferior personages must appear in equal lustre with the hero; for the poet must maintain the unity of design by a subordination of parts, he must draw less perfect, nay, vicious characters, to set off his hero and preserve this unity. In the lofty ode, monsters and tyrants whom the victor conquers, serve as a contrast, and magnify the conqueror's valour and justice,

Tragedy delights in cruel revolutions, in sudden and unexpected misfortunes of both the virtuous and the vicious. Even in such tragedies as end happily, the wise, the great, and the good, are involved in deep distresses; nay, are almost overwhelmed, before they can arrive at perfect happiness. But the deeper the distress,
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and the more inextricable the perplexity while the plot is carrying on, the more lively is the joy at last; and the happiness both of the spectators, and of the virtuous personages in the tragedy, is greatly augmented. Is there not a pleasure of a certain degree; is there not a high degree of instruction in beholding the disappointments and punishments of the deceitful, the malicious, and the cruel? A pregnant presumption, or natural augury of that satisfaction which will arise from a display, even of the justice of providence in some future period, when the perplexing scenes of the present life shall be explained and unraveled.

Thus, from the entertainment and instruction which arises from fiction and the poet's art, we may conceive how imperfect and vicious characters, and the calamities to which they give occasion, may aptly have a place in the grand system of our world, and may contribute to the greater glory and felicity of the wise and good. By this, we shall see a greater variety of characters, more surprising adventures.

ventures, a more various progress in the recovery and growing perfection of lapsed natures: we shall see more remarkable struggles and combats between virtue and vice, which at last may pave the way to more glorious conquests and triumphs of virtue, and virtuous men. Thus the various incidents of the great drama, connected together with marvelous art by the great "P O E T" and Creator, may conspire to one great design, and form the most perfect system.

It is not by lying on beds of roses, by enjoying the coolness and freshness of an aromatic air, in tasting the most delicious meats, in drinking the most refreshing liquors; it is not by indulging in the softest dalliance; nay, it is not by mixing these allurements of sense, with the more elegant arts, and the more sublime exercises of the mind; that the greatest vigour of human genius is excited or displayed, or the highest pleasures are obtained. It is by difficulties, dangers, and more arduous adventures, that room must be made, and opportunity given, for displaying

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ing the noblest talents, and for obtaining the highest prizes of virtue and felicity.

Fortem posce animam——

—Qui ferre queat, quoscumque labores

—— et potiores

Herculis ærumnas credat sævosque labores

Et venere, et cœnis, & plumis Sardanapali.

Juvenal. Sat. 10.

It is not when a nation is in profound peace, and enjoys an abundance of all sensible delights, secure and undisturbed, that the greatest genius, the greatest talents, and the greatest virtues become conspicuous. At such a time, mankind become indolent, they are rendered soft and sensual, they fall asleep in a manner, and their happiness is only of an inferior kind.

But, besides these general illustrations, how calamities by giving opportunities of displaying a higher genius and virtue, may contribute to the higher perfection of the universe: It is evident from experience, that they actually contribute to great and
good

good purposes, and give occasion to such high degrees of virtue and enjoyment, as could never have found place in the world, without supposing such imperfections.

Pleasure and pain, though contrary to one another, are wonderfully connected in nature. Though we cannot enjoy them together, and the presence of the one supposes the absence of the other; yet, the higher degrees of either of them, become preparatives for the other. Thus, as pleasures carried to a certain height, are sometimes introductions to violent pains; pains of a certain kind, prepare us for the highest relish of pleasure. Thus, recovery out of a disease, relief from poverty, restoration to soundness of mind after a disordered imagination, cheerfulness and inward ease after melancholy and anxiety; calmness and tranquility, after the fury of the passions; a perfect friendship and reconciliation, after feuds and enmity; a lively sense of our errors, vigorous resolutions of correcting them, and of acting more wisely and worthily, after a foolish and criminal behaviour; all these are the

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springs of a lively and sincere joy, both to ourselves and others. The wants and necessities of mankind, have been the occasion of many ingenious arts to supply them; our smaller blunders and errors, of many excellent rules for preventing errors which would have been more dangerous. The invention of such arts and rules gives joy; the contemplation yields delight; the observance of them adds strength and firmness.

Nature hath provided abundant materials of happiness, but leaves it to art and industry to put them to their proper use. Scarce any thing that is great and good, can be got without care and labour. Virtue and felicity will not come by chance. We must use strenuous endeavours, we must show courage and activity,

——Pater ipse colendi

Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem,
Movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.
Ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes
Paulatim——

Virg Georg. Lib. i.

The errors and vices of other men, which we have happily escaped, while they excite a generous pity in the breast of a good man, yield him at the same time a secret joy. What comfort in comparing our more advantageous circumstances, with our former difficulties, or with those of others! What transports in escaping imminent dangers, in finding our fears disappointed, in seeing ourselves, our friends, or our country delivered! Do not the losses of one man, turn out to the gain of another in the commerce of the world? The purchaser gains as much by a falling price, as the seller loses. If the death of one man becomes a loss to his family and friends, the good fortune of his successor gives equal joy to as numerous a party. Even the most dismal events often give occasion to extacy and rapture. If the vanquished suffer, and feel an extremity of pain, how great is the joy in the camp, and triumph of the conqueror? Without danger and distress, some of the most sublime virtues could never have found place. Without distress, whence could we have had the idea of pity and com-

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passion? Without danger, there could have been no room for fortitude and courage; whether in preserving our integrity, and supporting a righteous and an honourable cause, in spite of terrors and threatnings, or in defending ourselves and attacking injurious men, when honour and virtue call upon us. Without distress and calamity, whence the idea of patience, of submission, of resignation? What pity, methinks, if such excellent virtues had never had a place? In short, the highest virtues and joys of human life suppose evil, and without this bitter ingredient, could never have made their appearance; so necessary is it for the perfection of mankind to have tasted evil, or at least to have had the view and knowledge of evil, both moral and natural.

Upon the whole, though the infinitely perfect author of nature, must be supposed to be infinitely happy, without having ever tasted evil; though we may justly suppose various orders of creatures to be raised up, which are compleatly happy in knowledge, wisdom, piety, and benevolence,

lence, and in the abundant supplies of all things necessary for their natures, without having transgressed or felt any affliction; though such innocent and perfect creatures, have tasted a happiness superior to the mixed happiness of human kind; yet, as the view and knowledge of evil seem necessary in our present condition, for the compleat knowlege of some of the higher kinds of good, 'tis natural to conceive that an idea of evil may have a place among the eternal ideas of the All-wise Creator; and a system in which a variety of evils take place, may justly be supposed to be raised up in the immensity of the works of God. The introduction of evils may give an opportunity for displaying the most wonderful skill, the deepest wisdom, the most tender compassion, and highest acts of goodness. By means of those disorders which arise from this evil, the most perfect order may at last be established.

Does the Philosopher, therefore, assert the human mind, to be necessarily determined in its choice, from those prevailing motives

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tives which are continually presented unto
us by a foreign influence? Does the Di-
vine assert the necessary existence of evil,
in consequence of the eternal decrees of
heaven? Here is what he may offer in
defence of his hypothesis. Since evil (may
he say) actually exists in the world, it
has been found suitable to the highest wis-
dom and goodness to permit it; this will
not be denied by the most zealous asserters
of liberty. We don't go much farther
(says the philosopher and the divine) if
for the same reasons for which others as-
sert that it was permitted, we allow that
it might have been fore-ordained, and
that nature was constituted in such a man-
ner as would infallibly produce it.

Whether this is a good defence, or that
which of the two defences, or of the two
systems is best, let the world judge.

In the mean time it may be observed, that
whatever can be established by the meta-
physical philosophers, concerning the hap-
py influence of evil, in order to answer
objections against providence, will like-
wise

wise serve for the patrons of liberty. If the advantage flowing from any evil, was a good reason for predestinating it, it must be a good reason for the bare permission. In reality, by joining both systems together, in so far as it is possible; by allowing liberty in one sense, and necessity in another, we shall perhaps be best able to vindicate eternal providence, and justify God to man.

On the whole, let the philosophers and divines justify each of them their own hypothesis; let them proceed in their intricate debates, and determine them (if ever they can be determined) as they judge it proper. A pious and well disposed man, without interposing any particular judgment in such subtle and thorny questions, (and this is of the greatest moment) will find enough to fortify his mind against all the objections offered against a righteous providence; especially when he considers, (1). How guilty mankind are. (2). What a small proportion the quantity of pain bears to the quantity of pleasure: and, (3). How great a quantity of good is pro-

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produced out of this evil. In a word, if good so greatly prevails in all things which are in our view, how powerful an argument is this in favour of all the invisible works of God, and of those future and eternal ages, in which only the glorious system can be wrought up into a perfect maturity.

Thus, from the magnificence, wisdom, and goodness which are conspicuous in nature, we infer the existence of an infinitely wise, good, and powerful Creator and Governour. Again, from the idea of such a perfect being, we conclude, "a priori," that all things must have been originally formed, and must always be governed in the best and wisest manner. And, last of all, when we survey and examine the things themselves which have been raised up, and consider their necessary connections and relations, we can find a just and reasonable solution of those objections which have been proposed against the workmanship of the Great Creator.

P R O S.



P R O S P E C T X I .

Proof of a future State of Mankind
after Death, on the Principles of
Reason and Philosophy.



THE JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME XXII. PART I.
1892.

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PROSPECT XI.

“ **W**HAT man is he that liveth and
 “ shall not see death. Remember,
 “ O Lord, how short my time is. Where-
 “ fore hast thou made all men in vain ?” *

These have been ancient complaints, which will never be effectually removed, without the prospect of an existence beyond the grave. The shortness and uncertainty of life, are circumstances very humbling to mankind. Under violent pains from which we see no relief, it may be natural perhaps to wish for death. When we are greatly fatigued with business and care, we love to sink into sleep and to be at rest. Hence, death has been represented by the ancients, as a remedy

* Psalm lxxxix. 47, 48.

for

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for all the evils of life, and as the end of all our labours. But when our spirits are lively, and our circumstances are agreeable, we necessarily desire the continuance of our existence.

However, notwithstanding this ardent desire of life, death is necessary for mankind, and must be necessary for all animals which are confined within a limited earth, and at the same time are formed for propagation. It is necessary, at least, to remove them out of this limited earth, as it would be impossible always to find room, much less to find nourishment, for a continued succession of new animals, if the older were never to be removed.

When mankind die, and disappear in a constant succession, what shall we imagine becomes of them? Are they lost for ever? Or, shall we not rather believe that they are removed to some other region in nature? There cannot surely be any want of room for them in the immensity of the universe. No limits can be set to space. That almighty being who raised up the
crea-

creatures, can as easily support them, and prolong their existence to eternity, or to what period he sees proper, as he has preserved them in their present imperfect condition.

But on the first mention of eternity, an objection is thrown in our way by men of sceptical minds. Immortality (it has been said) is too grand a prospect for any creature whatsoever, at least for any creature within our view. Can we imagine that every animal, even the most contemptible insect, shall exist for ever. Who will be so ridiculous? If it be ridiculous to ascribe immortality to the rest of the animals (as every one, say they, will confess without hesitation) it will likewise be found ridiculous, upon an accurate examination, to ascribe it to mankind. Tho' men are superior to the brutes, in some, nay, in many respects; in others they are inferior, baser, viler, more contemptible. At any rate, there is no such superiority as intitles them to the high privilege of immortality. The nature of man bears a determinate proportion to that of any other

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animal: but immortality is to any determinate time as infinite to finite.

What pity is it that ingenious men should not rather incline to assert the dignity of human nature, than seem fond of setting mankind on a level with the brutes. Sometimes, however, they discover too visible an inclination to make us appear contemptible. According to M. Voltaire, "The mice who inhabit some little holes in an immense building, neither know whether the building is eternal, nor who is the architect, nor why this architect formed the stupenduous structure. They endeavour to preserve life, to people their holes, and to fly from the destructive animals by which they are pursued." To this he has added, "We are the mice, and the divine architect who has built this universe, has never, that I know, disclosed his secret to us." *

In this manner does this writer represent our nature and condition in the most

* Select pieces of M. Voltaire. Translated from the French, 1754. pag. 239.

mortifying light. But happily his comparison is not just. There is a manifest distinction between mankind, and those mice which inhabit some little holes in a large building. Mankind have a distinct idea of order, proportion, beauty and grandeur, of which the mice seem to be wholly destitute. These little animals know nothing, either of the architect, or of the end of the building which they inhabit: but mankind form clear conceptions of the immensity of the universe, of the ends, uses, and beauties of many of its parts, and of the infinite perfections of its author. Why, therefore, should ingenious men strain their fine genius, and misapply their great talents in depreciating human nature? Considered as that nature of which themselves are partakers, the contempt of it must light upon themselves; considered as the chief of the works of God within our view, any dishonour done to it, can never reflect honour on its creator.

At the same time, in order to maintain the superior dignity of man, or to demon-

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strate that the brutes are not on the same footing in respect to a future state; there is no necessity to assert, as some philosophers have done, that they are mere machines, without sense or perception. Nor have mankind any reason to grudge them either any perfections which they enjoy at present, or any existence they can enjoy in any future state: their immortality itself, if this can be supposed, cannot be prejudicial to mankind. There is abundance of room for all the animals in the wide extent of space. If the All-wise and Almighty Creator sees it proper to preserve the brutes, and to remove them to another scene; if he intends to enlarge their capacity, and gradually to promote them to a higher rank among his works; if he hath laid a foundation for this in the original constitution of their nature; if it shall at last be found that their nature is formed so as gradually to unfold higher faculties; who can find fault with such a display of the divine perfections. It ill becomes those who contend that the least particle of unfeeling matter shall never be annihilated; to assert, on the other hand, that

that it must be unworthy of the divine providence to preserve the brute animals, and to remove them to another scene. The most minute insect, sensible of its being, and capable of pleasure and pain, is of greater value, and of a nature more excellent, than the whole mass of senseless and inanimated matter. If it was suitable to the divine providence, once to raise up such living creatures, why should it be reckoned unsuitable to continue their existence for ever? Why should we attribute an immortality to the least particle of that matter of which their bodies are composed, and pour contempt upon those living substances which are of a far superior nature?

But what shall be the future state of the brute animals, is a subject less interesting; it is a question I do not examine; I have only glanced at it in a cursory manner, to obviate an objection against the future existence of mankind. For many, ridiculing the doctrine of the future existence of the brutes, on account of the lowness of their rank, would insinuate that the same

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argument may be used against the future existence of men. In this they are twice mistaken; first, as there is not any absurdity in the supposition, that every living creature which was ever brought into being, shall be preserved for ever, and during eternal ages make a progress through various degrees of perfection. This I would not be understood to assert, nor would I presume to enter too boldly into the divine counsels; though perhaps if we consult the light of nature alone in this question, this is the most probable opinion. But be this as it will, these scepticks are mistaken, in the second place, since the immortality of mankind, and of the rest of the animals, stands upon a very different foundation; for though all other animals should be doomed to perish wholly at death, it will appear that it is the visible intention of providence to render the human species immortal.

This question concerning the immortality of the human soul, is so curious and important, and occurs so naturally on a view of the uncertainty and shortness of
life,

life, that it was certainly started very early, and has exercised the thoughts of the inquisitive and magnanimous in all ages and nations. Philosophers who professed to make knowledge their study, and sought to penetrate into the hidden recesses of nature, could not fail to employ their superior faculties in enquiries into this subject. With an anxious care, they endeavoured to trace the evidence, if any could be found, of an immortal existence. To this side of the question, 'tis no wonder the best and wisest of them were so strongly inclined. They embraced with an eager fondness, the ancient tradition concerning the immortality of the soul; they gladly called revelation to the assistance of philosophy; thinking themselves happy if by any means they could satisfy their curiosity, and fortify themselves and others in the hopes of existing for ever.

Cicero carries this matter so far, that he declares he would rather be mistaken with the philosophers who contended for immortality, than be in the right with those who disbelieved it, whom he blames for

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want of magnanimity, and ridicules as minute philosophers. Sentiments of this kind, discover a greatness of mind! 'Tis certainly glorious to aspire to immortality.

However, we must not affect to believe a lie, in opposition to just evidence, or even to probability. It is not good to speak wickedly for the best of causes, or to talk deceitfully, even for God himself.* In vain shall we endeavour to put such a cheat upon our own understanding: if we examine the matter slightly, we shall every now and then be relapsing into scepticism. Would we therefore lay a firm and solid foundation for our faith of immortality, we must examine the subject accurately, calmly, and impartially; we must allow every objection, as well as every argument, its due force. And if, after all, we should not find ourselves able to arrive at certainty by the mere light of reason; if we imagined that the objections against an immortal existence overballanced the arguments brought for it;

* Job xiii. 7.

and

and if unhappily, in such a situation, we were destitute of a divine revelation, which has brought life and immortality to the clearest light; we would have reason, notwithstanding, to be thankful to God, for the numerous blessings we have enjoyed in life; and we ought to depart out of life, submitting, as chearfully as possible, to the orders and providence of the Almighty Creator, and wise disposer of all the beings in the universe.

It is to be hoped, however, that on a due enquiry, it will be found, even by the light of reason, that the father of our spirits has not exacted such an important sacrifice; and that whatever shall happen to the rest of the animals on this earth, nature itself points out an immortality to the human kind.

How great is the disparity between mankind and all other animals! Brutes are wholly guided by their appetites and instincts; they are not endued with a principle of reason, which is able to curb or controul their natural inclinations. As
far

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far as we have been able to judge hitherto, they can make but a small progress, and soon attain all the perfection to which they can ever arrive. They give no signs that they have any ideas of the beauty or grandeur of the universe. They are far from being able to form any notions of God, of Religion, or of Morality. They have no ideas of an eternal existence, nor any anxiety about a future state. Their hopes and their fears, their passions and their desires, and all things in their internal as well as external structure, seem wholly adapted to the exigencies of a short and uncertain life. As they neither have any knowledge of another life, nor any anxiety about it, nor longing after it, providence may well be justified, though it has not prepared any higher mansions for their reception; but having raised them up for the greater fulness of the creation, and having supported them as long as was originally intended, leaves them at last to that final dissolution which is suitable to their nature, and which is necessary for carrying on the higher designs of the divine wisdom.

The

The nature and circumstances of mankind are extremely different. Men are endued with the more divine principle of reason; their understanding is penetrating and capacious. Their imagination reaches to the most distant scenes, and apprehends objects beyond objects, without end. They can look back on innumerable ages already past, and extend their thoughts to an eternity to come. The whole circle of arts and sciences, with all the transactions of history, may be treasured up in their memory. Scarce can any bounds be set to their knowledge, but they seem capable of improvements without end. Arts and sciences, religion, morals, œconomics, politics, have been the subjects of their contemplation. They have carried their researches far into all of them. Longer time and experience, and larger scenes, would enable them to carry them much farther. They are also capable of mighty improvements of a moral kind, and have made great advances in piety, virtue, and sanctity of manners.

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It must, especially, be considered, that as they have unbounded prospects, both of time and space, they feel the most ardent desires after higher degrees of knowledge, and a more distinct and compleat acquaintance with those glorious works of God, which they can only at present see at a distance, darkly, and through a glass. They pant after immortality, and rejoice in the thoughts of the successive displays that shall be made of infinite wisdom and goodness, in a course of ages never to come to an end. Their thoughts are full of immortality. They desire to be remembered and honoured for ever. To this they have a constant view, in their good actions, in their brave achievements, in their name, in the grandeur of their family, of their posterity, and of their country; nay, even in death and corruption, they seek the honours of a funeral and a tomb. To what purpose are such enlarged capacities, and ardent desires, if they are never to be interested in any distant and future scenes, and if they, and all their thoughts, are so soon to perish

perish for ever? Why do we see such a mighty apparatus of faculties and powers, fitted for the most enlarged, and most lasting exercises and enjoyments, if they are nevertheless to be employed in such a narrow scene, and are so soon to be destroyed for ever? Shall we suppose a tall and stately ship, which is fit to traverse the ocean, and to resist the furious billows, to be built only in order to cross a contemptible rivulet? To what purpose enable them to conceive such distant worlds, if they are never to be further acquainted with them? Why point out such distant periods, and implant in their hearts such ardent desires after a future existence and future improvements, if by the condition of their nature, it is altogether impossible for them to obtain what they desire? Is this suitable to that fitness which is so remarkable in the arrangement of the works of God.

If we argue, that providence must find means to gratify every desire of the heart of man, we reason ill. If a man works himself up into the conceit that he must
see

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see Rome, or China, or the pyramids of Egypt, or that he must be put in possession of a fair estate which belongs to another, providence is not obliged to humour him in his fancies. There is no reason nor necessity, that men should obtain their whimsical, unreasonable, unnatural, or wicked desires. But where nature has implanted a regular and constant desire, it has also provided the means of a regular satisfaction. Thus provision is made to gratify every appetite, passion and desire of the human mind; the love of knowledge, piety, and virtue; the desire of glory, honour and fame, and every other reasonable and natural inclination. Of this kind may justly be numbered the desire of immortality, in an universe conceived to be unlimited in respect to time and space. We might as justly argue, that there might be such an appetite as hunger, in a creature which is not formed to be supported by food; or that the male sex might have existed without the female, among the works of a wise and good being; as that such ardent desires of immortality should be

be implanted in a creature who was never intended for an immortal existence.

It must indeed be confessed, that these desires are not so sensible as hunger and thirst, or as some other appetites and passions in our nature; they neither appear so early, nor are they so independant on education and instruction; nor have they so powerful, nor so regular and uniform an influence: but this does not prove that these desires are not natural, since the same objection may be raised against other desires, which none will deny to be natural, if there is any thing that can be called natural to mankind.

How far single men, separated from all others of their kind, by such a diligent use of their reason as they are capable of in that solitary state, might proceed in conceiving or demonstrating an eternal existence; and how far several passions might shew themselves in such a state, it is difficult to determine. No doubt mankind are greatly indebted to society for many discoveries which they have made; and hu-
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man passions appear very differently at present from what they would have done in a state of solitude. But this does not weaken the argument for immortality, drawn from their earnest longings after it. These are not artificial, but natural. Human nature is not to be estimated from what it is only capable of, or from what would only appear in a solitary state, or does actually appear in certain circumstances. There are many things belonging to our nature, which continue latent for a long time, and which are only disclosed gradually as we grow older, and by reflection, discipline, and experience, attain to a certain maturity. From the strong inclination which is visible in mankind, to unite and combine together, from the love of the two sexes, from the love of parents to their offspring, from the mutual affection of near relations, from that general good will, which men bear to the whole species when they do not interfere with one another; and from the seeds of pity and sympathy, which are laid so deep in the human breast, we conclude that nature intended mankind for society.

Such

Such affections and desires don't point out a solitary, but a social state. Accordingly, we find society every where established, and provision made for gratifying these social affections. Yet none of them appear the moment of our birth: but though the seeds of them are interwoven in our constitutions, and they are confessed by all to be natural, they lurk during a considerable time. The first springing is not discernible; they grow up gradually, and prove either weaker or stronger, as men's external circumstances prove either less or more favourable for cherishing them: and several of them are never so strong in some, as in others. Even the passion between the two sexes, though natural, does not begin early. In the same manner, the desire of knowledge, the sense of morality, a regard for virtue, a propensity to religion, the love of honour and fame, though none of them appear the moment of our birth, are all natural to mankind, and there are objects in nature suited to every one of them. From the same analogy we have just reason to conclude, that the

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desires and hopes of immortality are natural, and shall not be found to have been planted in vain.

It is true, sceptical philosophers may pretend, that neither the desire of knowledge, nor the sense of morality, nor a regard for virtue, nor a propensity to religion, nor the love of honour and fame, any more than the desire of immortality, are the work of nature, but of the preceptor and the priest; that they are the offspring of pride, and vain glory, arising from a fantastical conceit of the dignity of our nature, or from romantic views of providence; or that they are derived from a baser origin, the interested views of politicians; and are so far from ever becoming familiar, or making a deep impression, and having any considerable influence, that the first conception of them is difficult, and the impression so faint, that after all the endeavours of divines, moralists, philosophers, and law-givers, our regard to these principles, as well as our sense of immortality, is ever fluctuating, and has but little effect upon our conduct.

In

In particular, that whatever may be pretended by divines and philosophers, our conduct is almost intirely regulated on views of the present, and not of the future-life. No doubt, objections of this nature may be offered against our sense of morality and religion, as well as our desires of immortality being natural to mankind. But as this is not the place to enter upon the question concerning the origin of virtue and religion, and how far they are natural to mankind; in order to answer the preceding objections of the sceptics, I only make three observations.

1. That the desire of immortality is on the same footing with the propensities to virtue and religion, which are generally allowed to be natural to mankind.

2. That if creatures are endued with liberty, many of their natural desires and propensities will appear to be either stronger or weaker, as they abuse their liberty, or use it in a proper manner.

3. That in such creatures, even those propensities which the greatest sceptics will confess to be natural; in particular the passion of love between the two sexes; may receive many checks, and that on certain occasions, and in certain constitutions, these desires, though confessedly natural, may be weak and languid. Therefore, objections of the same kind, against the desire of immortality, being natural, must be equally invalid.

On the whole, the argument for immortality, drawn from its being so ardently and universally desired by mankind, seems of itself to be strong and powerful; but it will receive a great additional force, if we join to it the manifold and great distresses of mankind in their present life, notwithstanding the mighty preparations which providence has made for their happiness. As this is often made use of as an argument on the opposite side, it will require a more ample illustration.

All the works of God are, undoubtedly, according to weight, measure, and proportion.

tion. This must necessarily be supposed in our reasonings on this head. Therefore no appetites nor desires which are natural and universal, can be implanted in any creature wantonly, and without a good end. For the like reason, if mankind in their present state cannot possibly gain such a high degree of happiness, as is suitable to their natural desires, and to the mighty preparations which providence has made for their happiness, we may conclude that there is another state in reserve, to which these natural desires and preparations have a relation.

It is true, as we have already observed, mankind enjoy in life, a much greater share of good, than they suffer of evil: the sum of the pleasures within our view by far overbalances the sum of the pains. Nevertheless, it will be found, on a due examination, from whatever source this has arisen, that mankind have never enjoyed, and in this world never can be capable of enjoying, such a high felicity as is answerable to the preparations of divine providence. Hence we may infer, that

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human affairs are not finished at death, nor entirely concluded in the present scene of things, but run on in a future series, with which the state of the world at present is intimately connected.

That man is fitted for the society of his own kind, and intended for it by nature, is abundantly evident. Without society, he neither could exist at first, nor be preserved from immediate destruction. Human infants, without the care of the parents, are intirely helpless, and must perish as soon as born. Besides the society of the parents and the offspring, a more enlarged society of many families is absolutely necessary, for training up men to that perfection of which they are capable, and for furnishing them with the means of displaying their excellent capacities. To such an enlarged society, their natural affections and appetites evidently excite and lead them. Society is therefore natural to mankind, and the perfection of human nature can only be attained in it. A single man is but of little account, and separated from the rest of his kind, is insignificant.

significant. Nay, the whole species, if each of them is abstracted from the rest, and acts in a single capacity, can do but little. The strength of mankind, their dominion over the brute animals, the highest improvement of their nature, and their ability to subdue and cultivate the earth, must arise from their concord and happy union in carrying on their schemes by combined powers. Human nature, and the human kind, cannot therefore arrive at any great degree of perfection on this earth, but in proportion as human society can be rendered more perfect.

In determining concerning the perfection of society, we must judge, from the numbers of which it consists, from the happy and wise improvements of the human powers; from the extensive and distinct knowledge which mankind have attained, from their elegant and just taste of life and manners, from their skill in useful and ingenious arts and sciences; especially from their moral improvements, and their advances in wisdom and virtue. We must also take into the estimate, how much the

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globe which they inhabit has been cultivated and adorned; how far they have spent their life in peace, plenty, elegance, and dignity, without being harrassed and worn out with anxious care, and severe labour. In so far as human society approaches to this description, mankind become truly great, wise, and good, and society flourishes; but as it falls short of this, in proportion it is low and wretched.

If we examine things according to this standard, and compare the actual condition of mankind with these ideas of perfection, must we not lament the unhappy fate of the world? Human society has always consisted of a small number, in respect of that multitude which the earth was able to support. Of such a small number, many have died in infancy, through the poverty and neglect of their parents, joined to the cruelty and barbarity of the rest of their kind. Of such as have arrived at youth, or have lived to manhood, or old age, many have been pinched with poverty, many have been worn out with hard labour, many have
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continued rude and unpolished. How few, alas, have lived in ease, plenty, and elegance! Ignorance, false and foolish notions, and a wretched taste, have greatly prevailed. There has been little grace and dignity in the outward appearance, and little refinement in the mind. Many dwell in nasty and unhealthful cottages; their meals are often scanty or unwholesome, their tables are without elegance, their beds without decency, and their bodies are covered with rags.

But the circumstances of mankind, and of society, will appear in a much worse light, if we reflect upon their vices. What treachery, fraud, and injustice are conspicuous in the world! With what cruelty do mankind kill and destroy one another! What murders, massacres, and rapes have been committed! How many cities have been burned! How many provinces have been plundered! How miserable have been the effects of open violence and war! Where force is disclaimed, and friendship is pretended, they deceive and undermine one another. In ordinary

dinary traffick and commerce, they cheat and defraud: under the notion of refined policy, they employ baser arts, and a cunning far more vile. What impiety and ingratitude to the author of nature! How direful the force of superstition and enthusiasm! How much anxiety and wretchedness, are derived from all these plentiful sources of woe!

Ever since mankind began to investigate the causes of things, and to enquire accurately into the order of nature; ever since reasoning became an art, and the sciences have been cultivated; philosophers, moralists, and divines, have exercised themselves in searching out the hidden causes of that vice, and of those calamities with which this world has been so cruelly afflicted. Various opinions and hypotheses have been invented, in order to furnish a solution of this important problem. It is unnecessary, in our present argument for a future state, to insist on any of their solutions. 'Tis sufficient, in our speculations on this subject, that the evil

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evil has been sensibly felt, and the fact acknowledged by all mankind.

It is true, as we have already proved, there is not by far so great a proportion of evil, as some melancholy or ingenious men have imagined. It ought to be acknowledged with gratitude to the author of nature, that there is a much greater quantity of good. However, the happiness of mankind has been greatly prevented and disturbed by evil; nor have they ever enjoyed happiness in such a measure, as is answerable to the mighty preparations of providence for such an exalted order of creatures.

How easily can we conceive, without any greater preparations of providence than those which we see at present, that mankind might enjoy a much higher degree of happiness. How natural is it for a poet or philosopher to paint more agreeable scenes, in which mankind, with the very same faculties, and from the same materials with which the earth is stored at present, might enjoy a much greater
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felicity? There would not be any necessity of enduing them with any higher powers, or of altering the course of nature; we need not raise up golden mountains, nor set rivers running with milk and wine, nor make the earth produce spontaneously, without the labour of man. The order of the seasons might continue the same as at present; the rigours of winter be fully as severe; storms and tempests, those alone excepted which arise in the human breast, might blow as furiously as at present. Nothing more is necessary, than gently to pacify the tumults, to soften the rage, to moderate the ambition of the heart of man, and to dispel those phantoms and delusive apparitions which disturb his understanding, and deprive him of that superior happiness which providence hath placed within his reach.

After the most accurate survey of the condition of great multitudes of mankind upon this earth, can we really believe that the present scene comprehends the whole of what providence has intended for a race of creatures, endued with such exalted

alted powers, and capable of a much greater felicity! Is this the heighth of divine wisdom and art! Suppose any of the beings with whom we are acquainted, had art and ability sufficient to erect such mighty globes as are every where visible in the wide expanse of nature; to replenish the globe of our earth with all the riches with which it is stored, and to form such creatures as men capable of so much happiness; we would undoubtedly have a high opinion of their art and power, but could we have the same high opinion of their goodness, if they were well satisfied that mankind should enjoy no greater felicity than they do at present! Could a heart overflowing with benevolence, rest contented on beholding nothing greater than the glory of the natural world! Such a benevolent being might have very good reasons to suffer the present state of things to continue; but would a man, even of ordinary goodness, with all this power and skill, project nothing further or greater for mankind! To what purpose are all the glories of the natural world! What though there be a vast

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variety of splendid or luminous bodies, of
an amazing grandeur! What, though the
most admirable regularity and proportion
may be observed in their figures and mo-
tions! Of how little value is this, com-
pared with the happiness of rational be-
ings! The perfection of the works of God
cannot principally consist in the grandeur
or regularity of those bodies which we be-
hold in nature. The chief art and skill of
the divinity, must be measured by the wis-
dom of the moral world, and by that de-
gree of happiness which is attained by ra-
tional creatures. But if all the schemes of
the divine providence, with respect to
mankind, are wholly included in the pre-
sent scene of things, the divine wisdom
shines much more gloriously in the natu-
ral, than in the moral world; and pro-
vidence may justly be said to have erred,
or to be disappointed in its chief work-
manship. The author of nature must
therefore have some more extensive scheme
in view, and the affairs of men must run
on in a series, and extend themselves to a
future life.

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If this last supposition is admitted, it is easy to account for the wisdom of providence, in suffering those vices and calamities which take place in the present world. It is easy to conceive, how all of them may contribute wonderfully to a greater good. Mankind are often made wiser by their errors; they are made better by their misfortunes; their views are enlarged; their conceptions of good and evil are rendered more distinct. If we examine the calamities of life, as related to this life only, they may often be considered as the chastisements of a kind and tender-hearted parent; as the corrections of an able instructor; as bitter medicines prescribed by a skilful physician; as just punishments ordained by a just judge or governour; as pains which heighten our pleasures; or as the perplexities which happen in tragedy, and when the plot is unraveled, augment both the happiness of the spectators, and virtuous characters interested in the scene. But if these evils are supposed further to have a relation to a future state, much greater room is given for displaying the divine wisdom, in

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bringing good out of evil. How natural must it be, on this supposition, to conceive that the calamities in the lives of virtuous men, may naturally, as well as by a positive appointment, turn out to their advantage, and that punishments may also be proper and necessary in a future state?

But shall we admit, that there is so much disorder and misery in the present world; and from such high disorders, shall we conclude that there must be a perfect order in another? Shall we allow, that providence hath so much abandoned the care of virtue and of mankind, and has suffered them to be so greatly distressed; and from this very neglect, shall we argue, that she will be extremely anxious to secure mighty advantages to them in a future state? Is it not more reasonable to argue, from one degree of disorder to a greater, than from very great disorder to a high degree of order? In this manner would some able and ingenious men represent the argument I have made use
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of for a future state, though nothing is
more contrary to the nature of the case.

I am far from pretending that mankind ought to read providence in disorder, and from an uncomely face of all things below, to presume favourably of all above. On the contrary, I prove a providence from what we see of order. I contend, that there is a reigning order in the present state of things. Instead of allowing, or being under any necessity of allowing, that virtue is abandoned, and that all concern about mankind is given up; those who argue for a future state, assert strenuously, and can make it appear, that providence is already engaged, is greatly engaged on the side of virtue; and that mankind feel much more pleasure than pain in their present life: yet from the magnificent preparations of providence, for a nobler structure than has hitherto appeared, we are justly led to conceive a further building, and to apprehend a larger scheme. Though virtue has enough to raise her above pity, yet not above our wishes. As happy as we see her here,

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we have room for further hopes in her behalf*. Though mankind enjoy a goodly portion in the present life, we find good reason to conclude that their affairs are far from being compleated.

It cannot be denied, that there are disorders; 'tis visible that there are a great many, and some very great disorders in the present state of things: but these disorders are such as happen in human governments, where the happiness of the people is best secured; they are such as arise from mankind's perverting their reason, and abusing their liberty; they are disorders which flow from the mercy and lenity of the great Governour of all; they are disorders suitable to the moral government of rational creatures, who are not guided by the laws of mechanism, but left to direct themselves by a free choice. Now disorders of this kind, are so far from affording an argument against the wisdom of an administration, which

* See the Earl of Shaftsbury's Characteristics, 3d. edit. vol. II. pag: 276.

permits them for a time, that if an administration is wise and regular in all other respects, from these very disorders we may draw an argument for a future judgment, and contend with the greatest justice for an interposition of the Great Governour, and for a signal manifestation of his wisdom and justice. In this we find a "Nodus dignus vindice," and an occasion every way proper for God to interest himself.

When we consider the difference between the natural and moral world, we cannot but admit, that there must be a distinction between the divine government of the one, and of the other. The operations of bodies which are moved by virtue of an impressed force, according to the laws of mechanism, must differ widely from the operations of rational beings endued with liberty. The operations of the one, must necessarily have a more regular appearance, than those of the other. In the first case, seldom will there be any necessity for the miraculous interposition of the first mover. In the second case, where

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rational creatures have so much in their own power, and are capable of doing evil as well as good, there will be many occasions given for the interposition of the supreme director. To draw an argument against the wisdom of the government, merely from the existence of moral disorders among creatures that are endued with liberty, is an evident absurdity. To complain of such disorders, and to maintain at the same time, that there ought to be no interposition, is no less absurd. To believe that such interpositions have sometimes happened, is neither superstitious, nor enthusiastical. Such a belief has been ancient, constant, and universal. Such an interposition is not like that of a mechanic, who must every now and then set his clock a going, and often set the index right, because he cannot contrive an equable and perpetual motion. Whatever machinery may be in the natural world, a world of rational creatures cannot be governed by the laws of mechanism. To prevent any quantity of evil which rational beings are disposed to introduce, or to introduce a superior quantity of good
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to what they are naturally inclined to produce, evidently requires an interposition. 'Tis impossible to determine how often these interpositions may be necessary; it may often be impossible to discern them, when they actually happen. 'Tis more reasonable, however, to suppose that they happen but seldom, and that God generally permits his rational creatures to use their liberty as they think proper; otherwise, we suppose him at once to have endued his creatures with liberty, and not only on some great occasions, but commonly, to restrain them by immediate acts of power. Now, as such a supposition ought not to be made, the abuse of liberty sets the argument for a future state in a very strong light.

For supposing that God hath formed a vast number of creatures, and that he has endued them with liberty, in consequence of which they have actually done much hurt to one another; supposing likewise, that he seldom interposes to restrain them, and has not provided any future state in reserve, in which he can either support the

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virtuous, or call the guilty to an account;
can any thing be more justly considered as
abandoning them entirely? What would
be thought of an earthly prince, if he
should never interpose his authority to
curb injustice and cruelty, and shew no
superior regard to the best part of his sub-
jects, than to the worst? Shall we there-
fore attribute such a conduct to the su-
preme Governour of the world, which we
would condemn in any earthly monarch.

In judging of the divine government of
rational creatures, it is impossible for us
not to consider God as acting, in some
measure, after the manner of men. We
must form our conceptions of him from
ourselves, and what we know of ourselves.
We are certainly the offspring of God.
We bear the nearest resemblance to the
divinity of any of the beings within our
view. We are, indeed, the living images
of the All-wise. We ought, no doubt,
to remove all our weakneses and imper-
fections from our conceptions of the all-
perfect being; yet, still we must consider
our heavenly Father as having something
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analogous to our reason and affections. His justice, indeed, is unerring, and his wisdom far deeper, and more extensive than the wisdom of men; but both of them must be of the same kind, else we cannot understand them at all. God cannot be inattentive to the concerns of his creatures, nor view their distresses with indifference. That unnatural apathy which stoics have attributed to the wise man, has been thought to render his character absurd and contradictory. It is equally possible, under the pretence of elevating the divinity above the weaknesses of humanity, to draw such a character of God, as shall be made up of inconsistencies; and being rendered altogether unintelligible, shall wholly destroy the grounds of our trust and confidence in his goodness. Such is the character of the divinity by the Epicureans,

Omnis enim per se Divum natura necesse est
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe;
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,

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Ipfa suis pollens viribus nihil indiga nostri,

Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

T. Lucret. Lib. 1:

In this description some of the lines are natural and just, but upon the whole, there appears so much stateliness and indifference about all inferior natures, as robs the Deity of the most amiable of his perfections, and deprives us of all hopes of his assistance in our greatest distresses. The representations given of God in sacred Scripture, are far more natural and comfortable.

“ Though the Lord be high; yet hath
 “ he respect unto the lowly *. He hath
 “ looked down from the height of his
 “ sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord
 “ behold the earth, to hear the groaning
 “ of the prisoner, to loose those that are
 “ appointed to death †. Like as a father
 “ pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth
 “ them that fear him: for he knoweth
 “ our frame; he remembereth that we are

* Psalm cxxxviii. 6, † Psalm cii.

“ dust;

“ dust *: the Lord is gracious, and full of
 “ compassion; slow to anger, and of great
 “ mercy. The Lord is good to all, and
 “ his tender mercies are over all his
 “ works †. Happy is he that hath the
 “ God of Jacob for his help, whose hope
 “ is in the Lord his God, which made
 “ heaven and earth, the sea, and all that
 “ therein is; which keepeth truth for ever;
 “ which executeth judgment for the op-
 “ pressed; which giveth food to the hun-
 “ gry: the Lord looseth the prisoners: the
 “ Lord openeth the eyes of the blind:
 “ the Lord raiseth them that are bowed
 “ down: the Lord loveth the righteous:
 “ the Lord preserveth the strangers: he
 “ relieveth the fatherless and widow; but
 “ the way of the wicked, he turneth up-
 “ side-down. The Lord shall reign for
 “ ever; even thy God, O Zion, unto all
 “ generations ‡: is he the God of the
 “ Jews only? Is he not also of the Gen-
 “ tiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also ||. God
 “ is no respecter of persons, but in every

* Psalm ciii. 13, 14. † Psalm cxlv. 8, 9. ‡ Psalm
 cxlvi. 5 — 10. || Romans iii. 29.

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“ nation, he that feareth him and work-
 “ eth righteousness, is accepted with him *.
 “ Are not two sparrows sold for a far-
 “ thing, and one of them shall not fall
 “ on the ground without your father; but
 “ the very hairs of your head are all num-
 “ bered †.”

How comfortable, as well as reasonable, are such conceptions of the Deity? May we not in such excellent perfections, discover the highest regard to virtue, and trace the foundations of a future state of mankind, in which God will deal with every one according to his behaviour.

Notwithstanding the natural advantages of virtue and wisdom, notwithstanding that superior happiness which is inseparably connected with them, notwithstanding the justice of human laws, and all the immediate interpositions of the divine providence, either against the wicked on the one hand, or in favour of the virtuous on the other; must it not be

* Acts x. 34, 35. † Matt. x. 29, 30.

confessed, that there have been, in the present state of the world, such extraordinary scenes and occurrences, as require a more signal manifestation of the divine justice, wisdom, and goodness, than has appeared hitherto? How many innocent persons have been condemn'd to the most severe sufferings! How many virtuous men have exposed themselves to the most cruel torments, and have lost their lives, rather than violate their consciences, dishonour religion, abandon virtue, or be wanting to their friends or their country! Shall such virtuous souls, of whom the world was not worthy*, perish for ever, without any signal mark of the divine favour for such disinterested goodness! On the other hand, shall the basest hypocrites, the most cruel oppressors, the vilest and most abandoned of mankind, not only obtain their wishes, and flourish in the world by means of their wickedness; but by the habitual practice of vice, render it so familiar, that sometimes they feel less remorse for it, than those who are not so

* Heb. xi. 38.

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abandoned; shall they in this manner,
live and die in peace; shall they some-
times die with no contemptible character,
having had the art to conceal their vices
from the world; shall they leave their fa-
milies in a prosperous condition, and not-
withstanding all this wickedness, meet
with no remarkable testimony of the di-
vine displeasure, either at present, or in
any future state! What opinion would
we form of any earthly prince, who would
be so negligent in rewarding merit, and
chastising injustice! Would not the
goodness and justice of a wise and good
man, move him to interpose in scenes of
this nature! Notwithstanding the abuses
of liberty, there are certainly good rea-
sons for bestowing such an excellent gift
upon men; but their liberty necessarily
supposes a future state after death, or a
continual miraculous interposition to pre-
vent the abuses of it at present, else God
may be said to abandon his creatures, at
least to give up the best of them, on many
remarkable occasions, to cruel treachery
and oppression, from the vilest and most
contemptible.

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What shall we then say? shall we deny the liberty of mankind? Shall we assert a mechanical, or such a rational influence on men's minds as leaves them no freedom? This is contrary to the inward sense and experience of mankind. Shall we maintain, that after God has endued them with liberty, he continually restrains it by an immediate interposition? This also is contrary to experience, and is inconsistent with the multiplied abuses of liberty that are visible in the world. Shall we say that God having created a world of beings, whom he hath endued with liberty; hath left them to commit the highest abuses without proper punishments, or proportionable marks of his displeasure? This is contrary to the divine perfections, and the most distinct notions we can form of justice and goodness. But one of these three suppositions we must undoubtedly maintain; else we must suppose that he hath intended these rational creatures for a future existence, to which he hath referred a further display of his moral government, by placing them in circumstances

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stances suitable to their different sorts of behaviour.

Now if once a future state of mankind is firmly established; if death does not put an end to our being, but only translates us to another state of things; if our present life is but an entrance into being, and only the first stage or period of our existence, the great difficulty is overcome. After this, there is no reason to be anxious about any future period. Why should we apprehend that an infinitely good and powerful being, who hath endued mankind with such excellent powers, after preserving them from the violent assaults of death, and placing them in proper scenes in the invifible regions of nature, should afterwards deprive them of their existence, without reason or necessity.

Sceptics, indeed, may endeavour to perplex us, and raise doubts in this, as well as most other questions. It is not possible (may they say) for weak mortals to enter into the councils of him whose ways are

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are unsearchable. But as it is natural for us to conceive of the designs of heaven, as having some remote analogy with what we would propose to ourselves in similar cases, how can it be thought suitable to the beneficent author of nature, to annihilate all such pious and virtuous souls as he hath rescued from death, unless there was no longer any place for them among his works. But this never can be supposed. There may be a necessity, indeed, to translate them from one state to another, as one region may be overstocked: this is visible in the circumstances of our earth; but there can be no want of room in infinite space; and God can never want the means of raising up whatever number of creatures he chuses to bring into being, without the destruction of mankind, whose breasts he hath inspired with ardent desires after immortality.

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PROSPECT XII.



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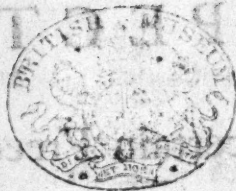
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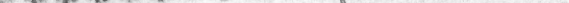
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PROSPECT XII.

HAVING in the preceding part of my book illustrated some of the fundamental principles of natural religion, I shall take the liberty, in this concluding Prospect, to offer a few advices to some of our modern Freethinkers.

According to a common observation, mankind have seldom preserved a due mediocrity. Virtue, it is said, lies in the middle, but men have been apt to run into extremes; and after they have carried their schemes too far upon one side at one period; in the succeeding, they have pushed them as far on the other.

Religion is certainly the best thing in the world. When it is kept pure and in a just proportion, it must produce excellent

effects; but, unhappily, it has not escaped the common fate. The world has often been overrun either with superstition and enthusiasm, which may be called excesses in religion; or has suffered through the decay of piety, by inroads of scepticism and infidelity.

We live in an age and country which incline to the last extreme. In consequence of the public taste and indulgence, scepticism is on a very flourishing footing; perhaps it has not abounded so much in any age since the commencement of christianity, nor has it prevailed more in any country than in Britain. It has, indeed, gone far enough, if not too far: it seems to be high time for the freethinkers to give check to their sceptical spirit.

The term Freethinker, according to the original sense of the word, denotes a character which deserves to be applauded; but as many of those who have laid claim to the name, have been guilty of no small excesses, this innocent term has fallen into disrepute; and the whole body of freethinkers

thinkers have not only incurred the censures of the religious, but may at last be exposed to the displeasure of the political part of the world.

All of them, however, are not equally guilty; some of them, compared with the rest, may well be called moderate and sober; while others have carried their schemes so far, that they have given offence to this sober part of the Freethinkers themselves.

The chief doctrines of the sober Freethinkers, are such as follow; they maintain that none are obliged to embrace any doctrine whatsoever, unless it be accompanied with sufficient evidence; that it is lawful for every man to examine whether the evidence is sufficient; that men ought to divest themselves of all prejudices, and never suffer the authority of any one man, or any body of men, to have an influence upon them in opposition to reason; that it cannot be dangerous to believe any doctrine whatsoever, upon an evidence which appears to be suf-

sufficient after a proper examination; that it should be safe for every member of society to profess his belief of any doctrine whatsoever, which does not destroy the sacredness of religion, give a sanction to vice and immorality, or tend naturally to disturb the peace of mankind; that all religious rites and opinions, which are not of this pernicious kind, should be tolerated; and finally, that every member of society against whom nothing of this impious or immoral nature can be objected, should be trusted and employed, both by private persons, and by the state, in proportion to his abilities and integrity, without enquiring more particularly into his religious principles and practice. In these points all, or by far the greatest part of Freethinkers, will agree; but in other respects they differ widely from one another.

No doubt, there are many Freethinkers, who profess to be friendly both to the doctrines of natural and revealed religion. They acknowledge an essential distinction between right and wrong; nay,

may, profess to be great admirers of virtue and honesty; they acknowledge the being of God, and the infinite perfections of his nature; they confess that there is an excellent order, both in the natural and moral world; they believe a future state of rewards and punishments after death, and they admit the truth of divine revelation.

But there are others, who carry their scepticism to the most extravagant length, and discard both revealed and natural religion. Such gentlemen not only call in question all miraculous interpositions, but profess a total ignorance of the nature and qualities of those beings that are superior to man. Instead of looking upon nature as the workmanship of an infinitely perfect being, and confessing that there is an admirable beauty and wisdom in the structure and disposition of the world; they consider it as the effect of chance, or of a fatal necessity, or as produced by weak and imperfect beings, without just design or skilful contrivance: instead of allowing any shining and heroic virtues, or even amiable qualities in human nature; they consider all

appearances of this kind, as refinements which have not any foundation in truth, but are compounded of craft and pride, and have been invented by ambitious and cunning men. Thus they represent every thing in the order of nature in general, and in human nature in particular, in a most contemptible light; and both think and speak dishonourably of God and of his works.

These last are the wildest of our Freethinkers. One would charitably believe, they are but the smallest number who have fallen into this delirium. However, some have been zealous enough to propagate such principles, and in this way have done harm, by encouraging the unthinking part of the world to gratify their vicious inclinations with less controul.

On this occasion, I do not enter on any controversy with the Deists, or meddle with any who acknowledge the principles of natural religion: at present I would only address myself to such extravagant Freethinkers, as deny, or speak doubtfully of
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the being or of the perfections of God, and would destroy the force of moral obligation. Many kind and generous attempts have been made to open their eyes, and to cure them of their prejudices; but those attempts have not hitherto had the desired success. This cannot be attributed to the weakness of the arguments made use of; for in truth, the arguments for religion and morality, are not only unanswerable, but have been set in so clear a light, that it is scarce possible to advance any thing new, or to say any thing better than has been already said on this subject. After what has been done, it seems unnecessary to enter anew upon a formal refutation of the systems of these Freethinkers. Yet as it were pity to give them up entirely to their errors, and there is a branch of this controversy that has been less considered, one may change the form of the attack, and instead of levelling our main force against the verity, calmly examine the importance of their doctrines; for after all that can be said of the value and importance of truth, many opinions are not of such importance that the world should be disturbed

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ed about them. Now if the uncommon opinions of the Freethinkers are of this sort, much more, if they threaten mischief to themselves and to society; if at the same time, there is nothing dishonourable in abandoning the defence of such principles; especially if this be entirely innocent, and agreeable to the soundest policy, why will they not act the wisest part for themselves and for their country? Whatever their principles are, many of them are very good-natured men: methinks it would be suitable to their character in this respect to take this matter into their serious consideration; and if they will take things in this view, they will find the following proposals not unworthy of their attention.

I. If any of them are disposed to believe that there is not any sincere virtue in the world; that all mankind are knaves, and ought never to be trusted but when their own interest is concerned, or when they can gratify a favourite appetite or passion; or that mankind are so entirely selfish, and so wholly void of benevolence, that

that whatever resembles real virtue, thorough friendship, or public spirit, is nothing but pride, hypocrisy or affectation, and was introduced by politicians, on purpose to subdue mankind, and to manage particular persons, not for their own advantage, but that of others; or that all our boasted notions of virtue, equity, and a public spirit, which have made so great a noise, and have been so highly celebrated in the world, have arisen wholly from education and political contrivance, without any foundation in nature; that they have been preserved by custom and fashion, and supported either by enthusiasts who have been deceived, or by cunning priests or law-givers who knew the mystery, but were laying the world under unnecessary restraints for their own advantage. If any of the Freethinkers have unluckily drunk in opinions of this sort, it would be happy for them if they could be undeceived, and would honestly give them up; or if they cannot be brought to renounce them, would it not be wiser for them, and might they not be persuaded to conceal them? for as they can-

not be straitned in conscience upon this point, so it can never tend to their honour or advantage openly to avow them, and to propagate them in their books and conversation.

Not to acknowledge merit where it is conspicuous in any particular character; to refuse the praises which are due to virtue; to misinterpret innocent and good actions, and attribute what proceeds from public spirit, to selfish motives; is unjust, ungenerous, and pernicious. 'Tis true, every appearance of virtue is not sincere; nay, there is much hypocrisy in the world; yet there is also a great deal of honesty and good meaning among mankind: to deny this in particular cases is unhand-some and ill-natured; but a total denial of virtue in all cases whatsoever, is far more criminal and mischievous. Such a system is so dishonourable to human nature, it is so different from men's feelings and experience, so contrary to good sense and true philosophy, such an absurdity in theory, and such a discouragement to an honest practice, so shocking in itself, and so in-

inglorious to those who have espoused it, that they ought to abandon it for ever, especially as they can never hope to succeed in establishing such shocking and extravagant doctrines.

The ideas of virtue, justice, equity, integrity, probity, generosity and benevolence, are so deeply imprinted in men's minds, that nothing will ever be able to erase them. Virtue does not depend upon fashion or education, but has as firm a foundation as the heavens or the earth; nay, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one tittle of this eternal law be destroyed or rendered of no effect. To do justice to the Freethinkers, this has been well illustrated by some of their fraternity; witness the noble author of the *Characteristics*, who, with all his failings, has treated this subject with a peculiar elegance, as well as strength of genius. 'Tis truly pity, that any of the order should have invented another system, and strained their genius to find out false refinements, and extravagant hypotheses concerning human nature; 'tis high time to give them up, and to acquiesce in the

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common, simple, and natural opinions of mankind.

These common opinions are, in truth, the most comfortable, and of the most happy influence, as well as best founded. If we have a just sense of the *pulchrum*, the *bonestum*, the *jucundum*, the *dulce*, the *utile* in actions or characters, we must approve the moral system; such excellent doctrines ought always to be cherished in the world, they ought to be propagated from father to son; the opposite opinions cannot yield us greater inward peace, or excite a more lively joy; they cannot render us more faithful or more just; by professing them, we cannot give an additional weight to our characters, nor shall we be more depended on by our neighbours, our friends, or our country: on the contrary, the loose notions of those Freethinkers, have a manifest tendency to render every man contemptible in his own eyes, and suspected to the rest of the world; instead of inspiring us with just and generous sentiments, they tend to kill every kind and worthy affection; instead of giving check to vicious incli-

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nations, they tend to encourage mankind secretly to indulge themselves in all sorts of knavery; in truth, such loose and ill-digested principles are good for nothing, but to promote such practices as often deserve the severest punishment. 'Tis by no means for the honour of the Freethinkers to encourage them any longer.

2. It would, in the second place, be worthy of such Freethinkers, to lay aside all those arts by which they have been attacking the doctrine of a future state after death, and have endeavoured to weaken men's belief of just and equitable rewards and punishments in another world, in proportion to our virtuous or vicious behaviour in the present life.

Is there any doctrine better calculated to give comfort to virtuous men, or to support them either under their distresses in life, or when they have the prospect of dying? what can give such an effectual check to vice, or better uphold a feeble and sinking virtue? It must be confessed, the prospect of future punishments is dreadful to the vicious; but it is necessary, both
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for their own good, and for the good of mankind, that the vicious should be deeply alarmed. It is a disadvantage, no doubt, that such pious and virtuous men as have the best title to joy, should, contrary to all justice, torment themselves with the dreadful prospects of future punishments: but it is better to submit to such a disadvantage, than to discard a belief which is not only consonant to men's natural notions of equity and justice, but upon the whole so comfortable and useful.

3. The Freethinkers would do well to consider, in the third place, whether it can serve any good purpose to deny the being or perfections of the Divinity, and give us such disagreeable representations of the order of nature, and of the state of the world, as tend only to fill us with chagrine. What comfort can mankind take in imagining that they dwell amidst confusion, in a distracted universe, or a fatherless world? What pleasure in looking on themselves as citizens of a wretched state, governed by unjust laws, and abandoned to foolish councils; or as sailing

in a leaky vessel, running adrift, and abandoned to the fury of the winds and waves, without helm or pilot? Shall we be better supported under our distresses, that we have no views of any superior being, to take care of us in our afflictions? or will our persuasion that all things are in disorder around us, inspire us with a stronger love of order in managing what depends upon ourselves? will it not rather render us careless and indifferent about whatever may happen, lead us to despair, create a weariness of life, and quench that ardour in acting with which nobler views would inspire us? Why therefore will these Freethinkers overlook such remarkable tokens of wisdom and goodness as occur every where in the course of nature? Why will they be so fond of taking things by the worst handle, and delight so greatly in heightening the sum of evils in life? Would it not be far happier, and more reasonable, could they be prevailed upon to think, to speak, and to write with more veneration of this goodly universe, framed with such admirable art, and adorned with such beauty and perfection?

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It must indeed appear unaccountable to the bulk of sober men, that the Freethinkers of our days should have made so many improper insinuations against these doctrines; and in particular, should have started so many doubts and difficulties upon the important and comfortable doctrine of a future state. As their objections against these doctrines of religion are ill founded, so any attempt to undermine them, or to weaken their influence in the world, is the worst policy, nay, may be called a sort of delirium. The most able sceptics cannot demonstrate that there is no God, no wise providence, no righteous, good, and merciful government, nor any future life: they will not pretend that any spirit has favoured them with the discovery; nay, they will find it difficult by the greatest efforts to free themselves from all apprehensions about the consequences of these doctrines to themselves. Possibly, indeed, they may doubt of them, which is very unfortunate for themselves; but why do they choose to bring such a misfortune upon others, when the bulk of mankind firmly believe them, and believe likewise that there are none but fools

or knaves who deny them? Are not the Freethinkers unkind to themselves, in choosing to appear in so bad a light; and unfriendly to the rest of the world, in endeavouring to rob them of so mighty a consolation, and so strong an incentive to virtue?

In this, undoubtedly, some of the great philosophers of antiquity, though admirable in many other respects, erred greatly. Both Stoics and Academics wrote too dubiously concerning the Divinity, concerning providence, and concerning a future state. 'Tis pity the author of the *Characteristics*, who hath derived such noble sentiments from the antients, and copied so many of their graces, should have imitated them even in their defects; and while he contemplated the order and beauties of nature with such rapture and veneration, should have written with such an air of scepticism on a divine retribution. Scepticism, on so grand a point, must ever be accounted unfortunate for the Sceptics themselves, and can never be attended with advantage in human society.

Those philosophers may indeed be acquitted of bad designs, nay, appear to have been betrayed into this mistake by a high regard to virtue. Unwilling that any part of the argument for that which in itself was so excellent, should be understood to rest on a foundation, which some might think unsecure, and believing that virtue could be sufficiently supported by its own native worth and dignity, they would needs maintain its authority, without any regard to the doctrines of piety, and a future state. According to the maxims of these philosophers, whatever is supposed to be the true system concerning the divine nature, or the government of the universe, or a state after death; whether there are Gods or not, or whatever is their nature, and whether mankind are to exist longer or shorter, for a finite time only, or for ever; virtue is in itself so excellent and amiable, that whatever dangers and distresses it may be exposed to; and vice in its own nature is so base and contemptible, that notwithstanding all its allurements; every being capable of discerning this essential difference (as all rational beings are) is bound by the law
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of his nature to pursue virtue, and avoid vice at all times: and this they thought sufficient for supporting virtue and virtuous men.

This sentiment, in one sense, is truly just and noble: "Unus dies bene & ex præceptis virtutis actus peccanti immortalitati anteponeendus" *. Virtue, in its greatest distresses, is worthy to be chosen for its own sake, and may justly be considered as its own reward: it may even be affirmed, if mankind are only to exist in their present state, and there is no powerful, wise, and good parent or governor to direct, protect, support, and comfort them, they ought not for this reason to abandon all concern, either for themselves, or their kind; but in this distressed situation, like children deprived of their parents and supporters, every one of them, conscious of his nature, and sensible of that good-will to his fellows, that sympathy with the distressed, and all those generous affections which are deeply implanted in the human breast, ought, in virtue of these natural

* Ciceron. Tusc. Quæst. Lib. V. Sect. 2.

ties, and as each of them would truly consult his own happiness, to join councils, and exert himself bravely for the common good. Such is the necessity and strength of virtue in the most melancholy situation, and upon the hardest supposition whatsoever.

At the same time it must be confessed, that the doctrine of a perfectly good, just, wise, and powerful governor of the universe, and of just and equitable rewards and punishments in a state after death, according to men's behaviour in this present life, add greatly to the force of virtue, are absolutely necessary for supporting it under all its trials, and for giving full comfort to virtuous men. What pity is it therefore, that those wholesome and sublime doctrines, with which some admirable authors are stored, should be mixed with such doubts and suspicions, as tend only to weaken the influence of reason, and strengthen the party of appetite and passion; and that persons who meant so well to mankind, should have been so much mistaken about the method of doing them service.